

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Blind Men and the Elephant

By John Godfrey Saxe  
1873

*John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887) was an American poet best known for the following poem. "The Blind Man and the Elephant" is a re-telling of an Indian parable, featuring six blind men who wish to observe an elephant. As you read carefully, take notes on the message behind the parable.*

[1] It was six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
Though all of them were blind,  
[5] That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant  
And, happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
[10] At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me, but the Elephant  
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling the tusk,  
Cried, "Ho! what have we here  
[15] So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 'tis very clear  
This wonder of an Elephant  
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal  
And, happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
Thus boldly up he spake:  
[20] "I see," quoth he, "The Elephant  
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out an eager hand,  
And felt about the knee:  
"What most the wondrous beast is like  
Is very plain," quoth he;  
[25] "Tis clear enough the Elephant  
[30] Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,



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Said, "Even the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can:  
[35] This marvel of an elephant  
Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope  
Then, seizing on the swinging tail  
[40] That fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
[45] Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong.  
Though each was partly in the right,  
They all were in the wrong!

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