

National Geographic Kids Reader: Whales

Notes for teachers: using this book in the classroom

Reading objectives: read most words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending, when they have been frequently encountered; read aloud books closely matched to their improving phonic knowledge, sounding out unfamiliar words accurately, automatically and without undue hesitation; retrieve and record information from non-fiction; check that the text makes sense to them, discussing their understanding, and explaining the meaning of words in context

Spoken language objectives: participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates; use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary; give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings

Curriculum links: Science: Animals, including humans; Living things and their habitats; Geography: Geographical skills and fieldwork; Art and Design; Writing – composition

Interest words: migration, mate, predator, spermaceti, carnivore, equator, blubber, echolocation, whaling, pollution, wondrous, monstrous, mysterious, illegal, tail fluke, blowhole, bachelor groups, navigate, scientists, submarine, ambergris, kerosene, chemicals, environment, pollutants, Greenpeace, Sea Shepherd Conservation

Pronunciation guide: ambergris (*amber-grees*), spermaceti (*sperm-a-sett-ee*)

Resources: ICT; paper; pencils; crayons; digital recorder

Children who are reading at White and Lime book bands will be able to read this book in a group, pair or independently over several sessions. They will have good reading stamina and will be able to tackle more challenging vocabulary and a range of varied sentence structures. Guided group work and independent challenges can be used to develop retrieval, interpretation and meaning making, as well as children's ability to express and explain ideas and concepts.

Language

- Most of the language in the book will be decoded by children using the full range of cues available to them and extensive word knowledge. Some discussion in guided groups and after independent reading can be used to develop children's abilities to understand and interpret more complex information. Children may need help with the following:
 - decoding and understanding some of the words contained in the *Whale of a Word* boxes: *migration, mate, predator, spermaceti, carnivore, equator, blubber, echolocation, whaling, pollution*. Children may need to look at the glossary to use the visual support provided.
 - reading and pronouncing some adjectives: *wondrous, monstrous, mysterious, illegal*.

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- reading topic words: *tail fluke, blowhole, bachelor groups, navigate, scientists, submarine, ambergris, kerosene, chemicals, environment, pollutant, Greenpeace, Sea Shepherd Conservation.*
- Children may need to look closely at the pictures and talk about some of the less familiar scientific vocabulary to develop their understanding of new ideas.
- Children may need help to follow the migration routes and interpret the information about sperm whale migration on pages 20–21.
- Children may need help to understand the explanation of echolocation and how it is used by whales for a variety of reasons on pages 34–35.

Images

- Look at the photographs of the whales underwater and help children to notice the skin's texture, their blowholes etc.
- Challenge children to look closely at the image on pages 14–15 and to read the description of the whale's features together. Help them to create descriptive phrases for each part of the whale's body, based on their observations.

Activities

- Using the websites on page 45, help children to undertake further research to find out more about the sperm whales and how different organisations are working to save them.
- Provide children with pencils, crayons and paper. Help them to make an 'amazing fact' poster about the sperm whale, based on the model on pages 32–33.
- Using a digital recorder, ask children to interview each other as sperm whale scientists, to recount some key facts and information.

Questions

- Why do whales stay together in pods?
- How many squid can a sperm whale eat in one day?
- What is blubber and what is it used for?
- How much does a sperm whale's tooth weigh?
- How can humans help to protect sperm whales?