

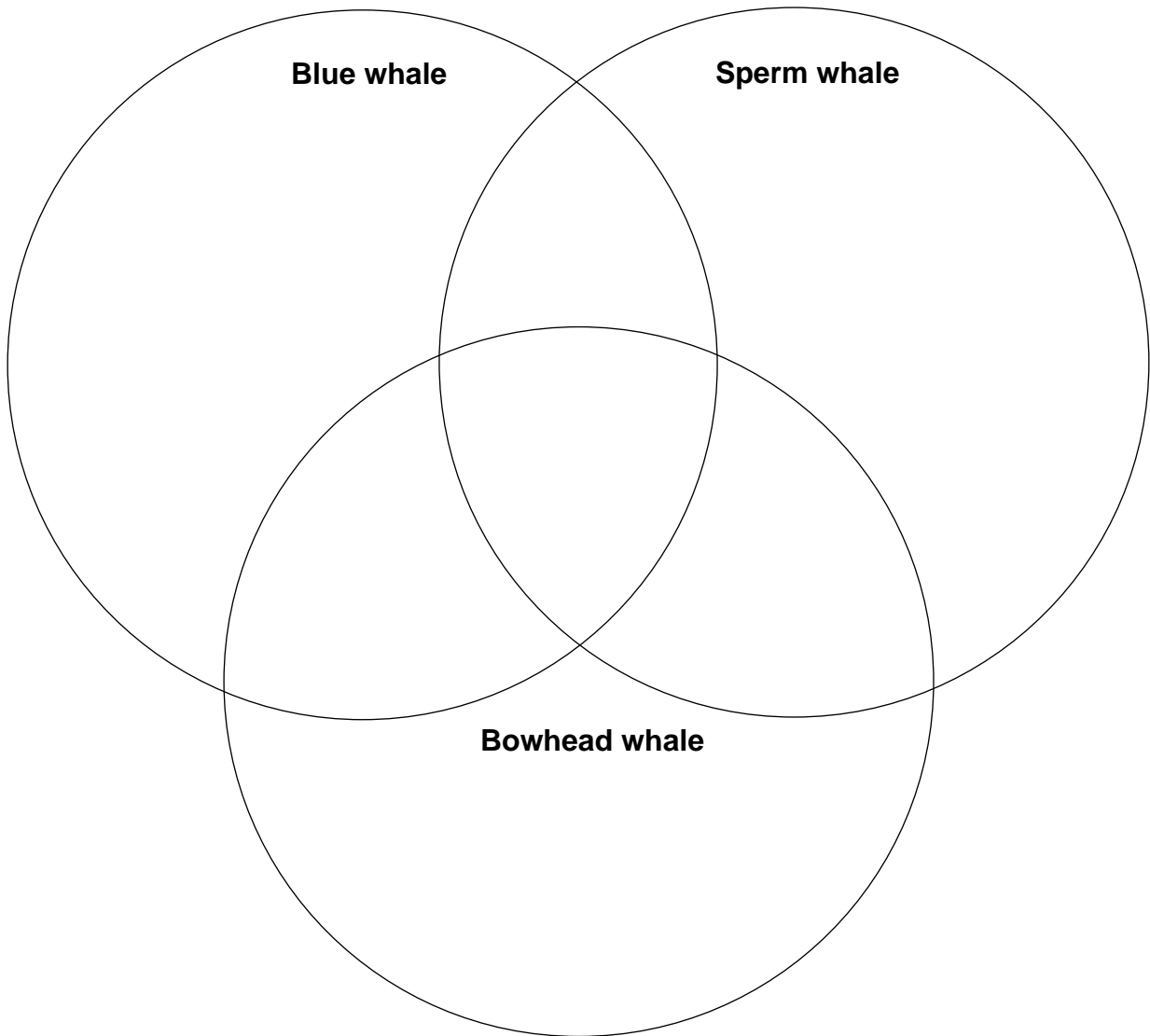
Activity 1

Do you know the answers?

1. There are ___ species of whales.
a) 5 b) 8 c) 10
2. Whales are ____
a) Fish b) Mammals c) Amphibians
3. The largest animal on the earth is a ____
a) Blue whale b) Humpback whale c) Elephant
4. Whales ____ have teeth.
a) don't b) all c) can
5. Moby Dick was a ____
a) Blue whale b) Sperm whale c) Humpback whale
6. The narwhal is special as it ____
a) has a horn b) has an extra flipper c) only lives near the equator
7. The killer whale is actually a type of ____
a) shark b) fish c) dolphin

Activity 2

Read the text and put the following pieces of information in the correct place in the Venn diagram.



- a) Was hunted for its oil
- b) Swims in the Arctic
- c) Is a mammal
- d) Has teeth
- e) Has baleen
- f) Eats squid
- g) Eats krill
- h) Doesn't have teeth
- i) Doesn't have a dorsal fin
- j) Dives

Whales

There are ten species of Great Whales although some animals, like the killer whale, have the word *whale* in their name they are not all actually whales. In fact, the killer whale is more closely related to dolphins, but, like all whales, it is a mammal. Almost all whales are either at risk or endangered – mostly because of hunting. Here is information about three of the 'Great' ten.

Blue whale

The blue whale is the largest animal living at the moment. It can grow to more than 30 metres in length and weigh as much as 150 tonnes. Its heart can weigh as much as a small car! Blue whales are found in all the oceans around the world. In the spring and summer they can be found feeding in the Polar Regions, while in the autumn they head for the warmer waters around the equator where they give birth to their young. Blue whales don't have teeth, they feed on tiny organisms called krill which they sieve through a comb-like structure in their mouth called baleen.

Sperm whale

Growing to about half the length of the blue whale, the sperm whale is still an amazing sight. The sperm whale is found in all the oceans of the world except for the Arctic. It is the only one of the ten Great Whales to have teeth and it feeds on squid, octopus and deep-water fish. Sperm whales have even been known to eat sharks! This whale is known as a great diver, diving deeper than any other mammal. It can dive up to 1km looking for food. In the 19th century sperm whales were hunted for their oil which was used for lamps. In Herman Melville's novel, *Moby Dick* was a sperm whale.

Bowhead whale

This remarkable animal is closely related to the right whale and is the only baleen whale to spend all its time in the Arctic waters – you cannot find a bowhead whale anywhere else in the world. The bowhead is specially adapted to the icy waters as its bony skull helps it break through the sea-ice and survive. Like the blue whale, bowheads feed on krill and other planktonic organisms. Unlike most other whales the bowhead doesn't have a dorsal fin and, along with its very large, unusually shaped head, this is one of its distinguishing features.

And finally, one of the strangest whales is the narwhal. The male of this species has a horn that can grow as long as two and a half metres. Many people think that the narwhal's horn may have led to the legend of the unicorn – a mythical creature with a single horn!

Activity 3

Read the text again and answer these questions.

1. How long can a sperm whale grow?
2. How much can a blue whale's heart weigh?
3. Is a killer whale really a whale?
4. What is special about the narwhal?
5. Where can't you find a sperm whale?
6. Where do blue whales have their young?
7. Why doesn't a bowhead whale get trapped by the ice?

Activity 4

Student A

You are a member of Save the Whale. You are against the hunting of whales and think these magnificent animals should be protected. You cannot think of any good reason why whales should be killed.

Student B

You are a scientist working for a country which has traditionally hunted whales. You think whaling (hunting whales) should be allowed to continue for scientific purposes. You also think it is OK to eat whale meat.

Whales

Adrian Tennant

Level

Pre-intermediate/Intermediate

Topic

Whales

Subject(s)

Science

Time (approx)

Activity 1: 10 – 15 minutes

Activity 2: 15 – 20 minutes

Activity 3: 10 minutes

Activity 4: 15 - 20 minutes

Preparation

Activity 1: Photocopy of quiz & text for each student.

Activities 2 & 3: One photocopy for each student.

Activity 4: Photocopy one per two students & cut into A & B worksheets.

Note: If you can, play a short video clip of Whales to start with. There are some suitable clips that you can find on the internet at:

<http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/images/video/player.php?id=a3f38228>

<http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/images/video/player.php?id=354bb1bb>

If you type in Whale + video into your search engine you should be able to find quite a few video clips.

Activity 1

- 1 Write up the word *Whales* on the board and ask the students to tell you things they know about these magnificent creatures.
- 2 Do this for about five minutes and, on the board, write down any interesting information your students give you.
- 3 Put students in groups and give each group a copy of the quiz.

- 4 Tell the students they have eight minutes to answer the questions in their group. Encourage them to discuss the answers.
- 5 Don't check the answers yet – tell them they will check them later.

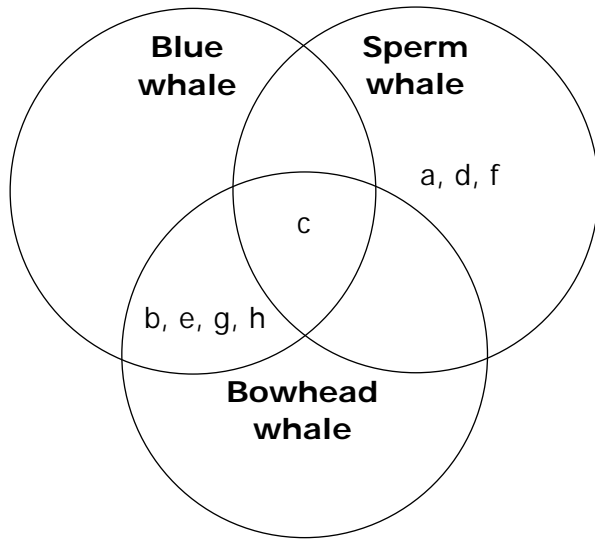
Answers

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1 c | 5 b |
| 2 b | 6 a |
| 3 a | 7 c |
| 4 c | |

Activity 2

- 1 On the board draw a Venn diagram and label the circles A, B & C.
- 2 Explain to the students how a Venn diagram works, i.e. information about A goes in that circle. However, if the information is common to A & B it goes in the area where the two circles overlap. And, if it's common to all three it goes in the middle area where the three circles overlap.
- 3 Tell the students they will read a text which contains information about three whales and they should complete the Venn diagram with the information given.
- 4 Hand out the worksheets to the students and give them ten minutes to try and complete the Venn diagram.
- 5 Monitor and help where necessary.
- 6 Put the students in pairs and get them to check their answers together.
- 7 Check as a class by getting the students to complete the Venn diagram on the board.
- 8 You could also go back and check the quiz answers now.

Answers



Activity 3

- 1 Hand out the questions.
- 2 Put students in pairs and ask them to work together and see how many of the questions they can answer from memory.
- 3 Ask the students to read the text again and find / check the answers.
- 4 Check the answers as a class.

Answers

- 1 15 metres (half the length of a Blue)
- 2 As much as a small car
- 3 No (it's related to dolphins)
- 4 It has a horn
- 5 In the Arctic
- 6 In the warm waters / seas around the equator
- 7 Because it has a bony skull which it uses to break through the sea-ice

Activity 4

- 1 Divide the class into two groups – A and B (in larger classes you could sub-divide these groups).
- 2 Give students in group A the Student A role card and give students in group B the Student B role card.

- 3 Tell them they have five minutes to discuss the information on their card with the other students in their group. Point out that they will be having a discussion with someone who has the opposite view to the one on their card.
- 4 Monitor and help where necessary.
- 5 Next, pair up the students so that there is one student A working with one student B.
- 6 Tell the students to have a debate with their partner. They should argue the viewpoint given on their role card.
- 7 Again, monitor and help where necessary.
- 8 Finally, open up the discussion and see what students' real opinions are.

Useful websites

A fantastic guide to the great whales of our oceans.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/guides/456900/456973/html/default.stm>

Part of the Save the Whale website with information about whales in general.

http://savethewhales.org/about_whales.html

If your students are interested here is a fantastic docu-video about the narwhal from the National Geographic. The video has a short commentary to go along with the actual clip.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSjjHiysBbE&feature=related>