



This is a passage about how giant orca whales live together and care for each other.

## ***Swimming with the Pod***

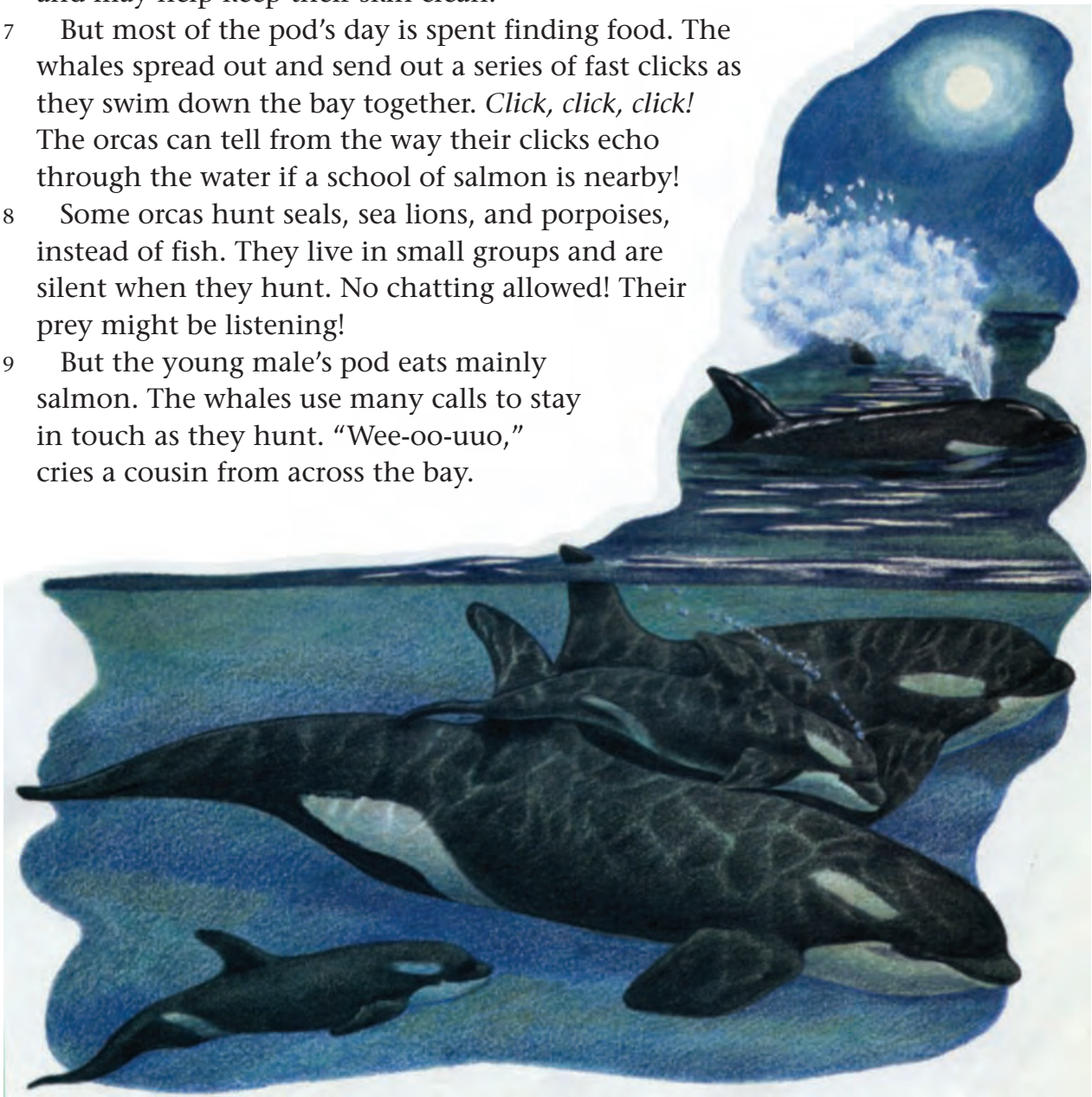
by Catherine Ripley

- 1 PFFFFF! Splash! A six-year-old male orca whale surfaces, shooting a big spray of stale air from the blowhole on top of his head. For several minutes he and his family slice slowly through the ocean waves, breathing deeply, filling their large lungs with air. Then, side by side, the orcas dive.
- 2 The male is the youngest and swims close to his mom. To their left is his uncle and in front, leading them all, is his grandmother. A second uncle swims nearby. And just beyond him are two more families in the pod, which is the name for a group of whales. The 16 whales in this pod live together in Johnstone Strait, on the northwest coast of Canada.
- 3 Most orcas stay with the pod they are born into for their whole lives. As an *infant*, the young male swam beneath his mother's belly, where he was safe and could nurse easily. When he was born, his mother probably helped him to the surface to take his first breath. Whales need air, just like people, or they will drown. Sometimes the pod might even help an injured whale come up to the surface for air.
- 4 When orcas are not searching for food, they like to "talk" and socialize — even play! They roll and splash in the salty water, and they call to each other. *Scr-eee-CH! Whistle! Whistle!*





- 5 The young male *spyhops*. He punches his head and upper body above the water and looks around. He sees a female cousin *breach* the waves. She throws her body almost completely out of the water and crashes down again. *KERSPLASH!* Another cousin swims sideways and smacks her flipper playfully against the water. *SLAP!*
- 6 Now Grandmother is speeding toward shore and the family follows. She rubs her massive body through the smooth rounded rocks on the bottom of the bay. Mom goes next and the young male follows. The family spends the next hour “beach rubbing.” Scientists think this feels good to orcas and may help keep their skin clean.
- 7 But most of the pod’s day is spent finding food. The whales spread out and send out a series of fast clicks as they swim down the bay together. *Click, click, click!* The orcas can tell from the way their clicks echo through the water if a school of salmon is nearby!
- 8 Some orcas hunt seals, sea lions, and porpoises, instead of fish. They live in small groups and are silent when they hunt. No chatting allowed! Their prey might be listening!
- 9 But the young male’s pod eats mainly salmon. The whales use many calls to stay in touch as they hunt. “Wee-oo-uuo,” cries a cousin from across the bay.





“Wee-oo-uuo,” answers Grandmother. “Squ-eee-AL, CRe-e-e-eak,” calls Mom. Each pod “speaks” slightly *differently* from the next, and scientists can recognize a particular pod by the sounds its whales make.

- 10 Soon the orcas’ bellies are tight with salmon. It is time for a rest. Orcas cannot sleep under the water. They must come to the surface every few minutes to breathe. So they cruise slowly forward, diving, then surfacing for air, in a regular resting pattern that can last for hours. Swimming together, the young whale and his family surface, breathe, and dive . . . surface, breathe, and dive . . . ZZZZZZ!

**1**

As an *infant*, the orca swims under his mother. Which means the opposite of *infant*?

- A** Teen
- B** Baby
- C** Child
- D** Adult

**3**

What does the word *breach* mean in this sentence from the passage?

“He sees a female cousin *breach* the waves.”

- A** Break through
- B** Dive deep into
- C** Punch down into
- D** Swim sideways through

**2**

According to paragraph 5, what is a young orca doing when he *spyhops*?

- A** He is getting ready to eat.
- B** He is waiting for his mother.
- C** He is talking with his cousins.
- D** He is checking out his surroundings.

**4**

In the passage, *KERSPLASH*, *SLAP*, and *ZZZZZZ* are examples of —

- A** rhyme.
- B** alliteration.
- C** consonance.
- D** onomatopoeia.



5

According to the passage, which of these goes in the empty box?

Grandmother orca  
leads her family  
toward the shore.



Grandmother orca  
rubs on the  
smooth rocks.



The family spends  
about an hour  
“beach rubbing.”

- A** Mom rubs on the smooth rocks.
- B** Uncle is the last one to “beach rub.”
- C** The cousins rub on rocks next to the young male.
- D** The young male follows his cousins to “beach rub.”

6

Which of the following describes the correct order of the passage?

- A** Playing → Sleeping → Breathing → Hunting
- B** Breathing → Playing → Hunting → Sleeping
- C** Sleeping → Hunting → Playing → Breathing
- D** Hunting → Breathing → Sleeping → Playing

7

What is the base word of  
*differently*?

- A** diff
- B** differ
- C** differen
- D** different





8

What was the author's purpose in writing this passage?

- A** To inform
- B** To entertain
- C** To complain
- D** To persuade

10

Where would the reader *most likely* find this passage?

- A** A journal
- B** A story book
- C** A nature magazine
- D** A science fiction book

9

Which of these is another good title for this passage?

- A** "Sleeping in the Ocean"
- B** "The Underwater Silence"
- C** "A Different Kind of Family"
- D** "Fish of the Northwest Coast"

## Answer Key with Assessment Objectives Identified

	Item Number	Correct Answer	Assessment Objective
Longer Passage with Multiple-Choice Items	1	D	<b>1.4.06</b> Use antonyms to define words.
	2	D	<b>1.4.04</b> Determine the meaning of an unknown word using word, sentence, and cross-sentence clues.
	3	A	<b>1.4.05</b> Use synonyms to define words.
	4	D	<b>2.4.12</b> Identify examples of poetic devices using sound, (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme, consonance).
	5	A	<b>1.4.21</b> Identify or summarize the order of events in a story.
	6	B	<b>1.4.21</b> Identify or summarize the order of events in a story.
	7	D	<b>1.4.01</b> Determine the meaning of an unknown word using knowledge of common prefixes, suffixes, and word roots (see Roots and Affixes list) (e.g., using knowledge of the suffix -ish to determine the meaning of foolish).
	8	A	<b>1.4.26</b> Identify the author's purpose for writing a fiction or nonfiction text (e.g., to entertain, to inform, to persuade).
	9	C	<b>1.4.19</b> Identify the main idea of a selection when it is not explicitly stated (e.g., by choosing the best alternative title from among several suggested for a given passage).
	10	C	<b>1.4.26</b> Identify the author's purpose for writing a fiction or nonfiction text (e.g., to entertain, to inform, to persuade).

To view all the reading assessment objectives, download the *Illinois Reading Assessment Framework* for Grades 3–8 online at [www.isbe.net/assessment/IAFindex.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/IAFindex.htm).