



Aquatic Adventure: Eat like a Whale

For Parents/Teachers

Topic: Adaptations of whales, dolphins, and porpoises for feeding

Grade Level: Worksheet best suited for 3rd-6th, Worksheet & lesson adaptable for all ages

Vocabulary:

Adaptation – something a plant or animal has or does that helps it to survive, adaptations can be physical like baleen, or behavioral such as how humpback whales use bubble netting as a behavioral strategy

Baleen – the keratin based body part within the mouth of certain species of whale, hangs from the upper jaw and allows whales to filter out their food (plankton) from the water

Cetacean – classification of animals including whales, dolphins, and porpoises belonging to the taxonomic Order Cetacea

Marine Debris – trash items or refuse found in the ocean or along the coast, many marine debris items are plastic and pose a danger to marine life

Plankton – living organisms that drift with the ocean currents, phytoplankton are plant like organisms and zooplankton are animal like organisms.

Next Generation Science Standards:

1-LS1-1: Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs.

✓ **LS1.A:** Structure and Function

All organisms have external parts. Different animals use their body parts in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place, and seek, find, and take in food, water and air. Plants also have different parts (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) that help them survive and grow.

3-LS4-3: Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular habitat some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.

✓ **LS4.C:** Adaptation For any particular environment, some kinds of organisms survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.

4-LS1-1. Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction.

✓ **LS1.A:** Structure and Function

Plants and animals have both internal and external structures that serve various functions in growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction.



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Set Up:

1 set of grill tongs

1-2 paintbrushes

1 comb

A container of dried herbs

Small colorful objects such as sprinkles, glitter, or beads

Small toys no bigger than your thumb but no smaller than a penny

1 clear container for water that has room for 2 hands

1 towel

1. Fill your clear container with water
2. Add in your krill (dried herbs), fish (small toys), and marine debris (small colorful objects).
3. Use the comb, paintbrushes, and tongs to try to “eat” the krill and fish but avoid the debris.



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For Kids

Let's Study Cetaceans: Whales, dolphins, and porpoises

Fill in the blank: Listen to the Aquatic Adventures Video on National Marine Life Center's Facebook page. Recall what you've learned by filling in the blanks.

Whales, dolphins, and porpoises belong to a large group of animals called Cetaceans. Whales, dolphins, and porpoises are mammals just like me! They breathe _____, have at least a little hair or _____, give _____ birth, and their babies drink _____.

Some whales have baleen! It's a special adaptation. An adaptation is something a living thing has on its body or something it does that helps it to survive. Baleen can be found inside of a whale's _____. It is made of keratin, the same protein that makes up my _____. Baleen helps whales eat. Baleen whales eat _____, it sticks to the baleen and the _____ is able to back out of the mouth, leaving just the food inside.

Some whales have teeth! The largest toothed whale is the _____ whale. Dolphins and _____ are considered whales and have teeth. A dolphins teeth are shaped like _____. Teeth are better for catching _____ than baleen is. My favorite toothed whale is a _____.

Investigate → Observe → Record

What tool worked best to "eat" fish?

What adaptation for whales does this mimic?

What tool worked best to "eat" krill?



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What adaptation for whales does this mimic?

What other tools could you try to mimic baleen?

What other tools could you try to mimic whale teeth?

Would a baleen whale or toothed whale be the most at risk for ingesting (eating) marine debris? Why?

Draw your favorite whale and label the adaptations it has.

Species _____ . My whale has (circle one) baleen teeth.