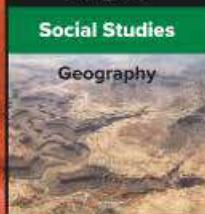


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Word List



# The Wonders of Whale Poop



## Think? & Talk

- How do whales work in our ecosystem?
- What will happen if whales become extinct?

## Build Vocabulary

Track 02

**mammal**

*n.* a warm-blooded animal that feeds milk to its young and that usually has fur

**iron**

*n.* a metal element found in blood and in all living things

**poop**

*v.* to pass waste from the body

**organism**

*n.* an animal, plant, human, or any other living thing

**marine**

*adj.* found in or produced by the sea

**breathe**

*v.* to take air into and out of the lungs

**surface**

*n.* the top part or layer of something

**guardian**

*n.* someone who protects something

**VISUALIZE** | Look and match to complete the sentences.

1 Mammals feed their



lives in the aquarium.

2 A variety of marine life



full of organisms.

3 The forest is



babies with milk.

**APPLY** | Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences.

surface      guardians      poop      iron      breathe

1 A lack of \_\_\_\_\_ in the blood can cause health problems.

2 Harry taught his dog to \_\_\_\_\_ in a box.

3 The police are \_\_\_\_\_ who protect people from dangers.

4 It's difficult to \_\_\_\_\_ because there's too much dust in the air.

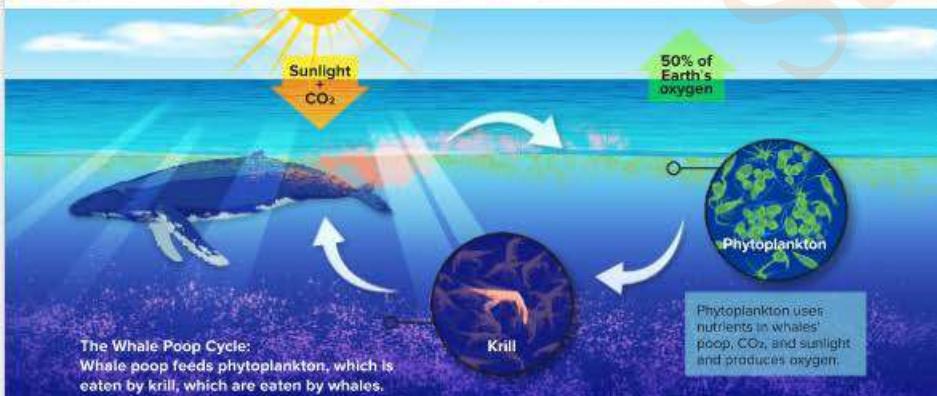
5 About 71 percent of Earth's \_\_\_\_\_ is covered by water.



# THE WONDERS OF WHALE POOP

Whales are the biggest **mammals** on Earth, and they eat a lot. So, they also **poop** a lot. Sounds pretty gross, right? But whale poop keeps our **marine** life healthy. People used to think whales would eat all the fish and leave the oceans empty. However, it's the opposite!

First of all, whales poop near the ocean's **surface**. Their poop has lots of **iron** and other nutrients in it. When the sun shines down on their iron-rich poop, guess what happens? Phytoplankton begins to grow! Phytoplankton is a tiny **organism** that floats on the water. When there's plenty of phytoplankton, you'll find lots of krill and small fish. That's because they **feed on** phytoplankton. Now, what happens when there are lots of krill? The whales will come up and eat them! And after a big meal, they will poop near the surface. This results in more phytoplankton, then more krill, and more whales. It helps the ocean ecosystem go round.

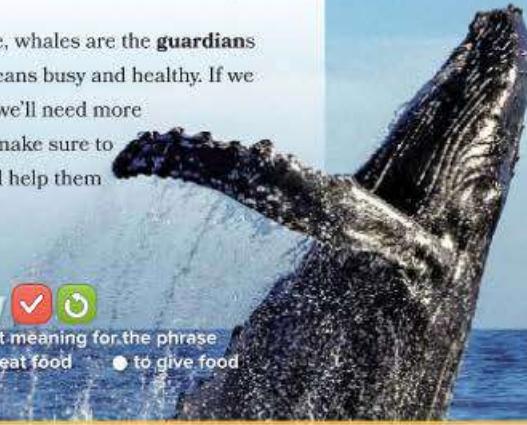


But whale poop does more than that. As the phytoplankton grows, it pulls carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Then it releases oxygen. This makes the air cleaner and easier for animal life to **breathe**. Now that's amazing!

As you can see, whales are the **guardians** that keep our oceans busy and healthy. If we want more fish, we'll need more whales. So let's make sure to protect them and help them do their job!

## WORD CHECK

What is the closest meaning for the phrase "**feed on**"?  to eat food  to give food



## Read a Chart

### Endangered Whales

Whales are at the top of the food chain and have an important role in keeping our oceans busy and healthy. However, some great whale species are on the endangered list.



**Blue Whale**  
Length 25–26.2 m  
Weight 100–120 tons  
Estimated number 5,000–15,000



**Sei Whale**  
Length 13.6–16 m  
Weight 20–25 tons  
Estimated number 50,000



**North Atlantic Right Whale**  
Length 13–18 m  
Weight 40–80 tons  
Estimated number 300–500

#### Whale Threats



Ship Strike / Fish Gear



Whaling



Pollution / Climate Change

## VISUAL CHECK

What large whale's estimated population is no more than 500?

Blue whale  Sei whale  North Atlantic right whale

## READING CHECK

Which paragraph describes how whale poop cleans the air?

1st  2nd  3rd

## Comprehend It!

Choose the correct answers.  



### 1 What is the passage mainly about?

- a. how whale poop helps the ocean
- b. where whales go to poop
- c. why whales eat so much fish

### 2 What did people use to think about whales?

- a. They thought whales pooped too much.
- b. They thought whales looked kind of gross.
- c. They thought whales would empty the ocean.

### 3 Phytoplankton grows with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. iron-rich whale poop, krill
- b. organisms, CO<sub>2</sub>
- c. sunlight, iron-rich whale poop

### 4 What is NOT true according to the passage?

- a. Phytoplankton becomes food for other marine animals.
- b. Whale poop results in more phytoplankton and krill.
- c. Phytoplankton pulls oxygen from the atmosphere.

### 5 What can be inferred from the passage?

- a. We need to protect whales from other humans.
- b. Our oceans today are healthier than ever.
- c. Some fish follow whales and eat their poop.

## Write It!

relative pronoun: that

### 1 Circle the best place for the word "that" in the sentence.

Phytoplankton is ( @ ) a tiny organism ( ® ) floats ( © ) on the water.

### 2 Join the two sentences using the word "that".

Krill are tiny, shrimp-like creatures. Krill feed on phytoplankton.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

## Summarize It!

Complete the summary.  



### Beginning

Paragraph 1

Whales eat huge amounts of food and poop a lot. You probably think whale poop is dirty, but in fact it plays an important role in \_\_\_\_\_.

### Middle

Paragraphs 2-3

- Whales' iron-rich poop results in \_\_\_\_\_, and more whales. This makes the ocean world busy and go round.
- As the phytoplankton grows, it \_\_\_\_\_ . It provides a cleaner and healthier atmosphere.

### End

Paragraph 4

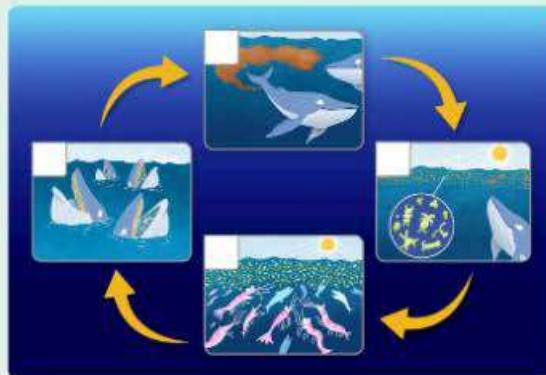
Whale poop is just one of the many different reasons that make whales important. We have to \_\_\_\_\_.

protect whales and help them do their job  
pulls in carbon dioxide and releases oxygen

more phytoplankton, then more krill  
keeping our oceans busy and healthy

## Focus on Skills Cause & Effect

How does whale poop help the marine ecosystem? Write the correct letters.



- a. Krill and small fish eat the phytoplankton. The number of them increases.
- b. Whales poop near the surface of the ocean. Their poop is rich in iron.
- c. More whales come up to eat lots of krill and fish.
- d. Sunlight and whale's iron-rich poop grow lots of phytoplankton.



Why are whales important for our oceans? What can you do to protect them?