


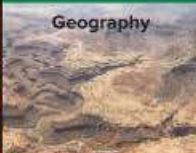





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The Wonders of Whale Poop



Ew! The whale is pooping. Whales poop an enormous amount! It's gross, isn't it? But whale poop is important for the oceans and for us too!

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.



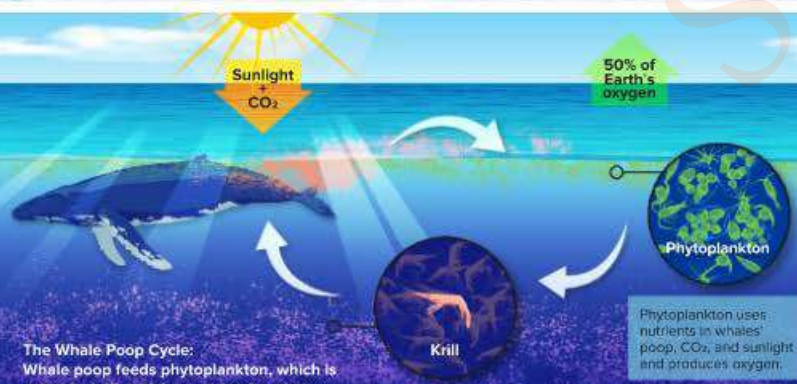
surface guardians poop iron breathe

- 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

READING CHECK

Which paragraph describes how whale poop cleans the air?

● 1st ● 2nd ● 3rd

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

Source: IUCN, WWF

VISUAL CHECK

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

● Blue whale ● Sei whale ● North Atlantic right whale

Whale Threats



Ship Strike / Fish Gear



Whaling



Pollution / Climate Change

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, CO₂
- 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) a tiny organism (b) floats (c) 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.



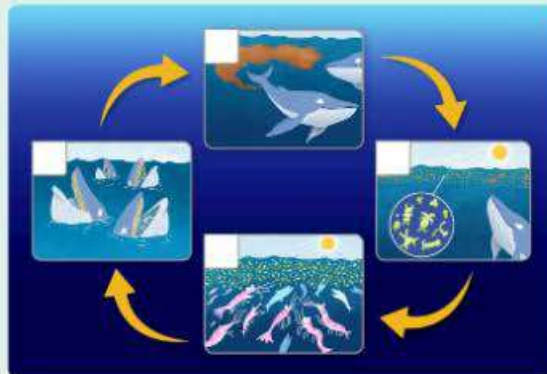
Beginning Paragraph 1	Whales eat huge amounts of food and poop a lot. You probably think whale poop is dirty, but in fact it plays an important role in _____.
Middle Paragraphs 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whales' iron-rich poop results in _____, and more whales. This makes the ocean world 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 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?