

## Whales

### ABOUT THE STORY

From the pygmy whale to the world's largest animal—the 100-foot-long blue whale—this book offers a thorough introduction to these spectacular mammals and their world. Tracing the development of the whale from its earliest known beginnings, Gail Gibbons' clear, succinct text and colorful, sweeping illustrations combine to acquaint the young reader with important facts about whales and to instill an appreciation of these fascinating animals.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Gail Gibbons is the author and illustrator of a great number of books that clearly show young readers how things work. Among them are *Zoo, Locks and Keys, Trucks, and The Post Office Book*. Another book, *Sharks*, is Ms. Gibbons' companion book to *Whales* and is also available as a Live Oak Readalong.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the group to tell what they know about whales. You may want to write the more interesting student comments on the board to serve as the basis for later discussion. Explain that the book they will read offers many interesting facts about whales.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### **Comprehension/Thinking Skills**

- "How do whales differ from fish?"
- "Is the largest animal in the world a whale?"
- "Are there more or fewer whales in the world today than there were two hundred years ago? Why?"
- "What are the two main types of whales?"
- "Do you think it is important that people try to keep whales from extinction? Explain your answer." (Make judgements)

#### **Vocabulary**

Write these words and sentences on the chalkboard. Ask children to copy the sentences, writing the correct word in each blank space.

mammals warmblooded grooves spout migration cosmetics

- Whales swim south in a yearly \_\_\_\_\_.
- A whale, like a dolphin, is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Whales and dolphins are not fish but are \_\_\_\_\_.
- Lines cut into wood or other material are called \_\_\_\_\_.
- A whale's \_\_\_\_\_ can be seen from a great distance.
- Another word for the makeup some women wear is \_\_\_\_\_.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### **Social Studies: Oceans of Whales**

Ask the group to name as many oceans and seas as they can. List their answers on the board and add any major oceans and seas they may have listed. Included should be the following:

Atlantic Ocean	Pacific Ocean	Indian Ocean	Arctic Ocean
Black Sea	Baltic Sea	Caribbean Sea	North Sea
Sea	Mediterranean Sea		Caspian

Locate each body of water on a map. Then help children find out which of the bodies have whales in them.

#### **Art: Create a Mural**

Have the group create a mural depicting the many whales shown in the book. Be sure to include a key or index providing at least one important fact about each whale.

#### **Science: Marine Mammals**

Have each child choose another marine mammal to research. Possibilities include seals, sea lions, dolphins, walruses, and manatees. Ask them to write a brief report about the mammal they have chosen and present it to the class.

#### **Music: Call of the Whale**

If possible, allow the class to listen to a recording of whale calls. After you play the whale calls, lead a discussion about what children think the whales are trying to communicate with the sounds they make.

### INTERNET ACTIVITIES

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

#### **More About Whales**

Ask children to work in pairs to choose one of the whales described in the book. They can use the name of the whale as a keyword to search the Internet for three additional facts about the whale. Have them write down the facts they find and show them to the rest of the group.