

# POP! TEACHER RESOURCE

## Lesson Plan

### Animal Adaptations

Lesson Plan for *Whales*

Grade 1

#### Objective

To help students understand the connection between different whales' physical traits and their eating habits.

#### Things Needed

- Several copies of the *Whales* book
- Whiteboard
- Paper and pencils

#### Before the Activity

Read *Whales* out loud to students.

#### Activity

Introduce the concept of animal adaptations to students. Explain that animals have certain qualities or traits that help them live in their environment. These adaptations could be physical. For example, whales have flippers instead of arms and legs. These flippers help them swim in the ocean. Adaptations could also be behaviors. For example, many whales live in groups called pods. The groups hunt and travel together. The book describes two kinds of whales: those with teeth and those with baleen. Students will learn about how these different adaptations help the whales catch and eat food.

First, turn to the index on page 24. Explain that an index lists some of the important topics described in a book. It also tells which pages in the book have information about those topics. Ask students the following questions:

- If we want to learn about whales with teeth, which pages should we go to?  
(Answer: pages 8 and 12)
- If we want to learn about whales with baleen, which pages should we go to?  
(Answer: pages 8, 9, 10, and 11)



Write these page numbers on the board. Then divide students into two groups. One group will look up facts about whales with teeth. The other group will look up facts about whales with baleen. Students should turn to each page listed in the index and read about their topic. They should write these page numbers, as well as the facts they contain, on a sheet of paper.

Give students time to research and write. Then come back together as a class. Invite volunteers from each group to share their research with the rest of the class. Write their answers on the whiteboard, using the following sample answers as a guide:

#### Whales with teeth

- Some whales have teeth (p. 8).
- Whales with teeth eat fish, squid, and other animals (p. 12).

#### Whales with baleen

- Baleen is a comb-like structure. It helps baleen whales catch tiny creatures called krill (p. 8).
- A baleen whale fills its mouth with water and krill. It pushes the water out with its tongue. The baleen keeps the krill from escaping. The whale swallows the krill (p. 10).

Finally, use the following prompts to help readers explore how these traits help whales catch and eat their food:

- How might having baleen help baleen whales catch and eat krill? (Possible Answer: The baleen's comb-like structure catches tiny krill and keeps them from escaping the whale's mouth.)
- How might having teeth help certain whales catch and eat fish, squid, and other animals? (Possible Answer: Whales can bite down on fish and squid. Whales can chew or tear their food with their teeth.)

#### Evaluation

Could students use the index to find information on baleen whales and whales with teeth? Could they explain how a whale's traits related to its eating habits?

#### Standards

This lesson plan may be used to address the National Science Education Standards' Content Standard C, grades K–4, and the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 1 (RI 1.3, 1.5).

