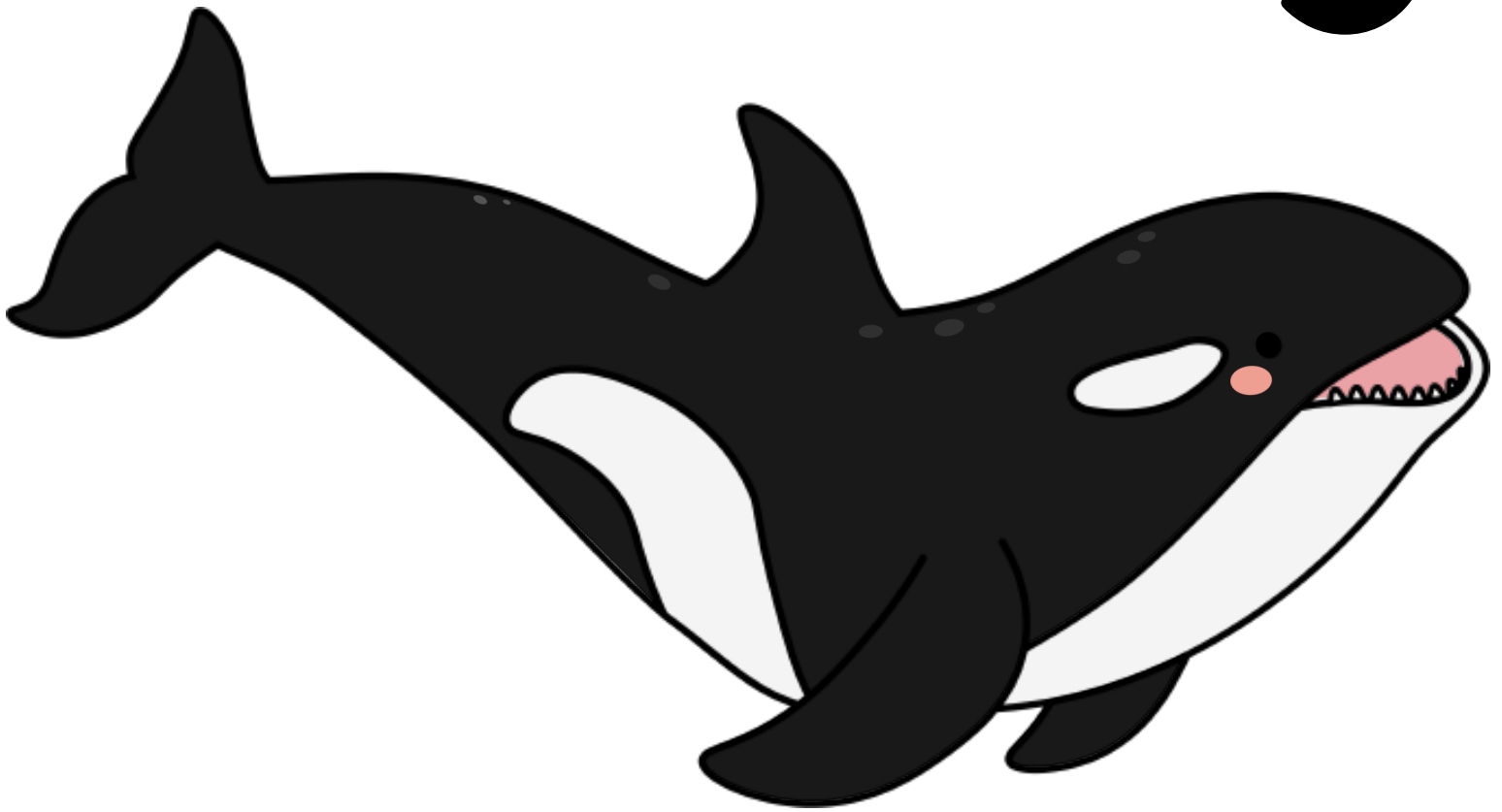


Whales Passing



Unit Study

Whales Passing

Book by Eve Bunting

Unit study prepared by Celia Hartmann

Social Studies

Relationships – Father and Son: Perhaps the father and son in this story are having a special Father/Son day out. Do you remember a time when you spent a special day with just one of your parents and with no siblings? What made it special? Did you bring home a souvenir to remember the day?

Souvenirs: When people go someplace special, like a vacation, it is tradition to take home a souvenir. Something that will remind the person of where they were. In this case the boy chooses a seashell that would allow him to hear the sound of the ocean; hearing that sound will remind him of seeing the whales.

Language Arts

Lyrical/Poetic Text: While the story does not follow a rhyming scheme, several lines do rhyme and have the feel of reading poetry or of singing a song. Go through the story with your student, picking out examples together.

Personification: The author chose to give human qualities to the orcas: talking, thinking, laughing. Go through the story with your student, picking out examples together.

Point of View – Shifting Narrative: Ask your student who is telling the story. Your student will probably say the boy in the story. Praise him if he also says that the whales tell part of the story. If he/she doesn't remember that the whales also "talk" about their observations of the boy, remind him. This shift in viewpoints is called *shifting narrative*, a fancy name that really just means different characters in the book tell part of the story from their viewpoint. Possible writing/narration assignment: Incorporate a shifting narrative in a story.

Vocabulary:

pod a group of whales that live and hunt and migrate together

surface to come up to the top of the water

spout the burst of spray from the blowhole of a whale

blubber the thick layer of fat between the skin and the muscle layers of whales

frolic to romp about playfully

Art

Cut-away View: Notice on the "surface, spout, and dive" pages that the view is half in and half out of the water...as a glass wall where in front of you and you were standing a little below the surface of the water. Compare with the "car-ee, car-ee" page...notice you cannot see the bodies of the orcas below the water's surface.

Zooming In: Look at the title page of the book. Notice how it looks like you're looking down on the scene from a low-flying airplane? Turn the page and it's like you're standing behind the father and son. Turn the page and it's as if you are right beside them. Illustrator Lambert Davis drew very similar scenes three times....each time zooming in closer and closer to the father and son in the scene. (Praise your student if he/she recognizes that the artist does the reverse at the end of the story: the last two illustrations zoom out from the whales as they leave.)

Math

Count by Fives: On the pages where you can see all five of the whales, count by fives. I came up with 55 (including title page, but not including the cover pages since it is one of the pictures in the story). If you would like, use 11 nickels as a visual aid when you count to demonstrate the value of 5 (11 times).

Science

Orca Whales: Read the note at the back about Orcas, glean facts to tell your child. A child should know that Orcas are often called Killer Whales and that they are not really whales, but dolphins (which are part of the whale family). They tend to travel in pods, which are like families. A child should have a basic understanding of what a blowhole and blubber is, and that orcas communicate by making sounds under the water. Color an orca whale. For further exploration, research and discuss the two types of whales: toothed (Odontoceti) and baleen (Mysticeti).

Migration: Why do orcas migrate? Where do they go and why? The colder parts of the oceans have more food in them, but newly-born calves of whales don't have enough blubber to keep them warm. So, whales migrate to warmer areas to have their babies and then return to the colder waters to feed and build up their blubber. For further exploration, research and discuss what other animals migrate and why they migrate.

Echolocation: How do most mammals find their food? By using their eyes or nose. These organs are not very helpful in the water...sometimes the water is too dark or cloudy and you really can't smell underwater. Orca whales use what is called echolocation to find food. Using their nose, they make sounds that move through the water. These sound waves will then "bounce off" of other animals and return to the orca, letting the orca visualize the object. Further exploration: research and discuss other animals that use echolocation.

Library List

Whales and Dolphins by Petra Deimer

Baby Whales Drink Milk (Let's Read and Find Out Science, Level 1) by Barbara Juster Ebsen

Whales by Gail Gibbons

Observation: The boy and the father in this story are observing (looking at and studying closely) the whales, and the whales are observing the boy and his father. By being patient and continually observing things (people, animals, etc.), you will learn more. Observation skills are needed in all aspects of life.

Bible / Character Development

Genesis 1:28b God gave man "dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." It is our responsibility to care for our earth and the creatures in it by being good stewards.

Jonah and the Whale

Read the story of Jonah

Just for Fun

Seashell: Put a large seashell to the ear and listen. What do you hear? Is it really the ocean? No, it's the amplification of the sound of your blood as it goes through your veins.

Field Trip: Visit an aquarium or SeaWorld. Bring home a souvenir.

Music: Find a recording of whales "talking" and listen.

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