

Save the Whales

“Save the whales!” That’s what the bumper sticker on the Smiths’ car read. It was an **abstract**¹ idea, of course. Jake liked having the sticker make a statement. He just never expected to get a chance to save a real whale, one right in his own neighborhood. It was a Saturday morning when the newspaper first reported the whale sightings. A **pod**² of the mammals were swimming close to shore. Everyone around the beach town rushed out to the shore to see them. They were expecting a beautiful show, better than a movie, but nothing they’d have to do anything about.

Then one whale swam toward them, right at the shoreline. It came in with the waves, and when the waves receded, it stayed. Its massive body rested on the sand. Suddenly, Jake and his family and all the others were no longer sightseers. They had to become rescuers. A few people ran toward the animal. They pushed and tried to force the whale back into the water, but it was no use. An animal rescue squad soon arrived in a truck with cranes and huge stretchers to help move the huge animal.

Jake and his family couldn’t do much on the beach, so they went back to their house and made sandwiches and hot tea to bring to the rescuers. At least, Jake thought, they could help in some way.

Back at the beach, they offered the food to the rescuers and were happy to see that it was needed. It was getting dark. Some people lined up their cars to keep the headlights shining on the beach. The rescuers would not give up. As the tide came in, they heaved the whale into the surf. They cheered when it headed out to sea. It swam out about a mile and then disappeared for a moment under the sea. Then, in what looked like a leap of joy, it rose in an arc over the water—a sight that was their reward for helping.

¹ **abstract:** expressing a quality or idea without referring to an actual person or thing

² **pod:** a group of whales gathered together, like a “school” of fish or a “herd” of cattle

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How did Jake's family first learn of the whale sightings?

- A They read about the sightings in the newspaper.
- B They heard about the sightings from a neighbor.
- C They saw a story about the sightings on television.
- D They read about the sightings on the Internet.

2. The passage describes the problem of a whale becoming beached. All of the following were ways the problem was solved EXCEPT

- A an animal rescue squad heaved the whale back into the sea
- B Jake and his family helped push the whale into the surf
- C some people shined their headlights on the beach when it got dark
- D Jake and his family brought the rescuers sandwiches and tea

3. After reading the passage, what can you conclude about Jake?

- A He is afraid of being so close to whales.
- B He is a helpful and caring person.
- C He has done whale rescues before.
- D He does not know how to swim.

4. Read this sentence from the passage: "It came in with the waves, and when the waves receded, it stayed."

Based on the text, the word **receded** means

- A became warmer
- B stopped working
- C came forward
- D moved back

5. The primary purpose of this passage is to describe

- A how Jake's family helped to save a whale
- B why a pod of whales would swim so close to the shore
- C how people react when facing a challenging problem
- D the training needed to become an animal rescuer

6. What did the animal rescue squad bring with them to move the whale?

7. How might the sightseers have felt when the whale ended up on the shore? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

_____ the whale headed back to sea, it jumped out of the water in what looked like a leap of joy.

- A For
- B Yet
- C As
- D But

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Jake Smith always liked the idea of having a "Save the whales!" bumper sticker on the family car because it made a statement.

Who? _____

(always did) What? _____

Where? _____

Why? because it made a statement

10. Vocabulary Word: pod: a group of whales gathered together, like a "school" of fish.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 730

Featured Text Structure: Problem/Solution – the writer poses a problem and suggests possible solutions

Passage Summary: “Save the Whales” describes how the Smith family jumps into action when a whale becomes beached on the shore in front of them.

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- D** the training needed to become an animal rescuer

6. What did the animal rescue squad bring with them to move the whale?

Suggested answer: The animal rescue squad brought a truck with cranes and huge stretchers. [paragraph 2]

7. How might the sightseers have felt when the whale ended up on the shore? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

Suggested answer: The sightseers were probably shocked because they were “expecting a beautiful show” of watching a pod of whales swimming close to shore [paragraph 1], and suddenly they “had to become rescuers.” [paragraph 2]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

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- A For
- B Yet
- C **As**
- D But

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Jake Smith always liked the idea of having a “Save the whales!” bumper sticker on the family car because it made a statement.

Who? **Jake Smith**

(always did) What? **always liked the idea of having a “Save the whales!” bumper sticker**

Where? **on the family car**

Why? because it made a statement

10. **Vocabulary Word:** pod: a group of whales gathered together, like a “school” of fish.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.