

A close-up, low-angle shot of an orca breaching the surface of the ocean. The orca's head and upper body are visible, showing its characteristic black and white coloration. The water is a vibrant blue with white foam from the splash. The orca's eye is visible, and its blowhole is near the top of the frame.

# ALL ABOUT ORCAS

Splash, spy-hop, and explore the ocean's powerful "killer whales"!

A NONFICTION UNIT

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## MEET THE ORCAS!

Whoosh! A big black-and-white animal leaps out of the water—it's an orca! **Orcas**, also called killer whales, are the largest members of the dolphin family. They are smart, strong swimmers and live in groups. Orcas work together to find food and take care of their young.





## WHAT ORCAS ARE LIKE

Orcas are **mammals**, which means they breathe air and drink milk when they are babies. They have smooth skin, a big **dorsal fin** on their back, and wide **flippers** to help them steer. Orcas are easy to recognize because they are black and white.





## WHERE ORCAS LIVE

Orcas live in oceans all around the world. They can be found in cold waters and warm waters. Some orcas live near coasts, while others travel far out at sea. Orcas swim long distances to find food.

## FROM CALF TO ADULT

An orca's life begins as a **calf**. Calves are born in the water and stay close to their mother. They drink milk to grow strong. As calves grow, they learn how to swim, breathe, and hunt by watching the adults. Over time, calves become adult orcas.



## WHAT ORCAS EAT

Orcas are **carnivores**, which means they eat meat. Orcas eat different kinds of food depending on where they live. Some eat fish, like salmon. Others eat seals or squid. Orcas are excellent hunters and often work as a team to catch food.



## HOW ORCAS BREATHE

Orcas breathe air using a **blowhole** on top of their heads. They swim up to the surface, take a breath, and then dive back down. Orcas cannot breathe underwater like fish. They must come up for air to survive.





## INSIDE AN ORCA FAMILY

Orcas live in groups called pods. A **pod** is like a family. Orcas stay together, travel together, and help each other. Mothers take care of their calves, and older orcas help teach the young ones. Orcas can stay with their families for their whole lives.





## KEEPING SAFE

Orcas stay safe by staying with their pod and using their strong swimming skills. They are top **predators** in the ocean, which means they have very few enemies. People can help keep orcas safe by keeping oceans clean and protecting sea animals and **habitats**.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Orcas breathe air through a blowhole.
- Orcas can communicate with clicks and whistles.
- Orcas can jump out of the water!

# QUESTION TIME!

1. (True or False) Orcas are mammals.
2. (True or False) Orcas breathe underwater like fish.
3. (True or False) Baby orcas are called calves.
4. (Fact or Opinion) Orcas are black and white.
5. (Fact or Opinion) Orcas are the best swimmers in the ocean.
6. Where do orcas live?
7. What do orcas eat?
8. What is an orca family group called?
9. How do orcas breathe?
10. How can people help keep orcas safe in the ocean?



# ANSWERS



1. True. Orcas are mammals.
2. False. Orcas breathe air at the surface, not underwater like fish.
3. True. Baby orcas are called calves.
4. Fact. Orcas really are black and white.
5. Opinion. "Best swimmers in the ocean" is a personal idea.
6. They live in oceans all around the world.
7. They eat fish and other sea animals, like seals or squid.
8. An orca family group is called a pod.
9. They breathe through a blowhole on top of their head.
10. People can help keep orcas safe by keeping the ocean clean, using less plastic, and protecting ocean habitats.

# GLOSSARY

**Blowhole** – the opening on top of an orca's head used for breathing air

**Calf** – a baby orca

**Carnivore** – an animal that eats meat

**Dorsal fin** – the fin on an orca's back

**Flipper** – a side fin used for steering and swimming

**Habitat** – the place where an animal lives and finds food and shelter

**Mammal** – an animal that breathes air and drinks milk as a baby

**Orca** – a large black-and-white dolphin that lives in the ocean

**Predator** – an animal that hunts other animals for food





## FUN WITH ORCAS

*Q: What do orcas say when they're excited?*

*A: "This is fin-tastic!"*