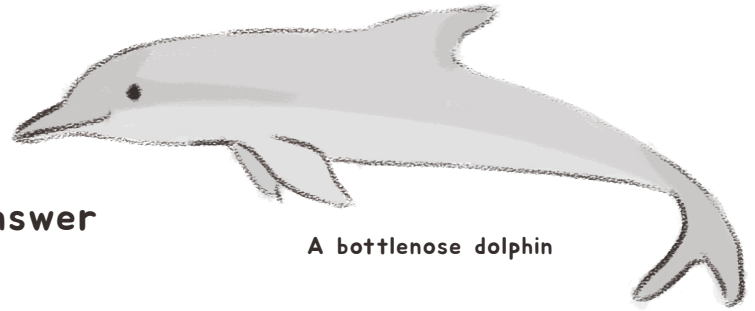# Reading Comprehension:
Dolphin Facts

Read the paragraphs below, then answer the questions that follow.

A bottlenose dolphin

Dolphins are in the same scientific order as whales, *cetacea*. Both types of mammals evolved from a land- and sea-dwelling creature called the *Indohyus*, which lived 54 million years ago. Cetaceans stayed in the oceans 49 to 44 million years ago and became adapted to living in **marine** environments. The *orca* (or killer) whale is actually in the dolphin family and is the largest at 30 feet long and 10 metric tons (22,064.2 pounds). The smallest are the *Maui dolphins* at four feet long and 90 pounds.

Dolphins are thought to be some of the smartest animals. Their mouths seem to be smiling, which fits their friendly and playful personalities. Dolphins like to jump out of the water, sometimes performing flips and spins. They are known to play with seaweed, tease birds and turtles, and swim alongside boats and with people. They also create "bubble rings" that they examine visually and with sonar, bite at to produce smaller bubbles, and use to help catch food. They live in groups called **pods** and even show signs of passing cultural habits to their young, such as using sponges to protect their noses while foraging for food.

Like whales, dolphins breathe through their *blowhole* by spouting out water and then inhaling into their lungs. Dolphins are in the group of whales that have teeth. They hunt fish in groups to corral the fish in a tight area, so they are easier to catch. Dolphins have even been known to work with humans in catching fish. In Laguna, Santa Catarina, Brazil dolphins chase fish toward fishermen and signal when to cast the fishing nets. The dolphins then catch the fish that manage to get out of the nets.

Dolphins have a sense of taste and like certain fish. Dolphins have very good eyesight, hearing, and touch, but no sense of smell. They emit sounds into their environment and listen to the echoes that come back from objects around them. This process is called **ecolocation**.

The dolphin's teeth act like antennae conducting the sound waves into a cavity in the jaw bone that leads to their middle ear. Dolphins also make whistling noises to communicate. Their noises can travel miles and are among the loudest sounds made by ocean animals.

1. How are the following words used in the text? Write the definition next to each.

marine: _____

pod: _____

ecolocation: _____

What land- and sea-dwelling creature did dolphins evolve from? _____

2. True or False? Circle the correct answer:

Dolphins are very playful. True   False

Dolphins have a great sense of smell. True   False

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