

# LOOK CLOSER

Weekly In-Depth Reading Comprehension



Can you:

- Find the facts?
- Interpret the information?
- Work out why the journalist wrote and presented the story in the way that they did?



13 **FirstNews** ISSUE 278 30 SEPTEMBER – 6 OCTOBER 2011

## ANIMAL NEWS

# Up close with a giant whale shark



**IMAGINE** swimming next to an animal that could fit you in his mouth and still have room to spare...

That didn't worry five-year-old snorkeller Kieran Liu, who was happy to swim next to this great whale shark.

It was the first time young American Kieran had been swimming in the open ocean.

"On the day, we were the first ones in the water," said photographer Eric Cheng.

"Kieran was suited up first and just jumped in some 20 miles

from land. He was amazing, not once did he display any fear."

Luckily this 10m (40ft) long whale prefers plankton and fish eggs.

Every year in late summer, huge numbers of little tunny fish gather in the waters off Isla Mujeres in Mexico to spawn.

This attracts up to 100 whale sharks at a time, and a few brave humans, like Kieran, go into the water with them.





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## Trunk art...

**KARISHMA**, an Asian elephant at Whipsnade Zoo, has been showcasing her artistic talents recently.

The 13-year-old elephant grasps the paint brush with her trunk and moves it around the paper on the easel.

Elizabeth Becker, elephant keeper at the zoo, said: "Karishma really enjoys painting, and it demonstrates just how dexterous elephants' trunks really are."

The female elephant has been at Whipsnade Zoo for four years and has

given birth to one baby called George.

A special event called Elephant Appreciation Day is taking place at the zoo this weekend and members of the public will be able to see Karishma's painting collection.

The appreciation day is trying to raise money for the Zoological Society of London's elephant conservation projects around the world.

## Nap time at the nursery



**A KEEPER** tucks in a group of giant panda cubs in the research base of the Giant Panda Breeding Centre in China.

China has launched its once-a-decade panda census, to try and work out how many of the endangered animals live in the wild and how to boost their numbers.

The census is also important to find out about the pandas' living conditions, ages and if there has been any change in their habitat.

According to the count a decade ago, there are 1,596 pandas left in the wild in China.

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ANIMAL NEWS - READING COMPREHENSION




# LOOK CLOSER

Weekly In-Depth Reading Comprehension

Can you:

- Find the facts?
- Interpret the information?
- Work out why the journalist wrote and presented the story in the way that they did?

Carefully read the article 'Up close with a giant whale shark' and then answer the following questions:

 1) Are these sentences true or false? Write **T** or **F** by each one.

Whale sharks eat humans.

Kieran encountered the whale shark the first time he swam out in the ocean.

 2) Why are whale sharks attracted to the sea off Mexico?

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 3) Find and copy two words that mean 'worry'?

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 4) Why has the journalist included a quotation in this article?

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 5) Give three ways that 'Up close with a giant whale shark' is written in the style of a newspaper article?

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# ANIMAL NEWS

5) What details in the article show that the journalist is presenting Kieran Liu as courageous to have got into the water with a whale shark?



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6) Sharks are often portrayed in newspapers, films and other media as frightening creatures. What impression of the whale shark do you think the journalist wants to give?



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## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- A.** Think of and write down an alternative headline for the 'Up close with a giant whale shark' article.
- B.** How does the type of language used in 'Sharks help in hunt for cures' in the **Science** section on page 24 of **First News** differ from the language used in 'Up close with a giant whale shark'?
- C.** Read and explore the rest of the **Animal News** stories in **First News**.
- D.** Head to the **First News** website [www.firstnews.co.uk](http://www.firstnews.co.uk) for more news and to find out how you can join in.

**Up close with a giant whale shark**

**Trunk art...**

**Nap time at the nursery**

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## TEACHER ANSWERS AND ASSESSMENT FOCUS GUIDANCE

# LOOK CLOSER

Weekly In-Depth Reading Comprehension

## 1) Are these sentences true or false? write T or F by each one.

**AF2** – understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotations and make reference to text

**L3** – Identifying obvious points

● Whale sharks eat humans (F) Kieran swam with the whale shark the first time he swam out in the ocean. (T)

## 2) Why are whale sharks attracted to the sea off Mexico?

**AF2** – understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotations and make reference to text

Possible answers:

**L4** - Identifying relevant points

● As a concentrated number of tunny fish spawn (produce eggs) in the sea off Mexico, and fish eggs are part of a whale shark's diet, there is enough in one place for big mammals to feed on.

## 3) Find and copy two words that mean 'worry'?

**AF2** – understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotations and make reference to text

Answers:

**L4** – Identifying relevant points

● 'phase' and 'fear'

## 4) Why has the journalist included a quotation in this article?

**AF6** – identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text on the reader

**L4** – Main purpose identified / **L5** clearly identified

● The quote by the photographer emphasises how exceptionally courageous Kieran was to swim with the whale shark by:

- stating Kieran was one of the first people in the water and it implies Kieran is brave not to have waited for more people to be with him and protect him;

- using the adjective 'amazing' to describe Kieran's actions - this shows praise for the boy's attitude and actions;

- adding that Kieran did not seem afraid at all, 'not once did he display any fear'.

## 5) Give three ways that 'Up close with a giant whale shark' is written in the style of a newspaper article?

**AF7** – relate texts to their social, cultural and historical traditions

Possible answers:

**L3** - Recognition of some features

**L5** - Comments identified with some explanation

Possible answers:

● Written in the past tense.

● Answers the five W's (What? Who? When? Where? and Why?)

● Use of reorientation at the end of the article to conclude the retelling of events or bring us up-to-date. As it tells us what is happening now it will move from the past tense to the present tense, i.e. 'a few brave humans like Kieran **go into the water** with them.'

● Has a headline in bold that is made up of only a few words and is eye-catching, uses alliteration, and action verbs etc.

● The paragraphs are written in columns.

● The article is written in a 'news-style' with short informative sentences giving details about the five W's (What? Who? When? Where? and Why?).

● It uses quotations.

● The photograph or picture will carry a caption.

## 6) Sharks are often portrayed in newspapers, films and other media as frightening creatures.

**What impression of the whale shark do you think the journalist wants to give?**

**AF6** – identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text on the reader

Possible answers:

**L3** – Simple reference to either the fact that the whale shark is scary because of its size or that the whale shark is not to be feared because it does not eat humans.

**L4/5** – A more developed answer clearly identifying the complex purpose of the article to emote a mixture of responses.

● There is a sense of awe (and even fear) at first about the creature as the journalist juxtaposes the overwhelming size of the whale shark with the five year old boy. The journalist builds up the feeling of tension as Kieran's bravery at getting in the water with the whale shark is repeated in the quotation and the detail about it being the boy's first time in the ocean. Tension is also heightened with the use of the large photograph, that dominates the text, showing Kieran with the whale shark. It is not until halfway through the article that the journalist puts the reader at ease (with some humour) by explaining that the whale shark does not eat humans unlike some other sharks, 'Luckily this 10m (40ft) long whale shark prefers plankton and fish eggs...' By concluding that people, who get into the sea to swim with whale sharks, are 'brave' the journalist nevertheless underlines the fact that Kieran's feat is one to be admired. The suggestion is that, even though the whale shark is not a predator of humans, they are still awe-inspiring to grown-ups, let alone little boys.

## TEACHER ANSWERS AND ASSESSMENT FOCUS GUIDANCE

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## Resource Explanation

**Look Closer** is a resource designed to encourage pupils to look closer at one article in the week's newspaper and analyse it in detail. Each week the questions will enable children to find the facts, interpret the information and work out why journalists wrote and presented the story the way they did. These questions are based on the assessment focus strands (AF2-7) which are referenced in the Teacher Answers along with suggested levels.

The resource aims to assist Year 6 pupils in developing the essential reading comprehension skills of extracting and understanding information. It is a useful weekly SATs practice activity using topical real news to engage pupils.

## Uses

Ideal for:

- guided reading
- booster sessions
- homework activities
- SATs practice
- whole class starters
- cross-curricular functional skills practice
- extension activities
- individual assessment focus (AF2-7) teaching opportunities by focusing on one question in a plenary session
- a handy record of pupils' reading performance and ideal APP evidence

This resource is available to schools that subscribe to **six or more** weekly copies of First News. It usually consists of seven pages including a blown-up version of the Look Closer article.

Download more of our teaching resources on our First News website  
[www.firstnews.co.uk/teachers](http://www.firstnews.co.uk/teachers)