

Non-Fiction: Comprehension Practice 1

Section A: Reading

Read this extract from an article about dolphins.

Dolphins

Kelly is a pretty amazing dolphin. She lives at a research centre in the USA where the dolphins have been trained to help keep the tanks clean. These dolphins have learned that if they pass a piece of litter to a trainer, they will be rewarded with a fish. Kelly is also a cunning dolphin and she has worked out that she can cheat the system. Every time Kelly finds a scrap of paper, she hides it under a rock at the bottom of her tank. Then, when she **spots** a trainer approaching, Kelly dives down and tears off a small piece to give to the trainer. When the next trainer turns up, Kelly tears off another bit. She seems to be thinking, why get one fish for her piece of paper when she can get lots?

Kelly's practical thinking doesn't stop there. One day a gull flew into her tank. She dutifully gave the bird to a trainer and was rewarded with several fish. This seemed to give her another great idea. When feeding time came around again, she took the last fish down to her secret hiding place under the rock. When the trainers weren't around, it seems she used the fish as bait to attract more gulls so that she could present them to the trainers for a reward.

In fact, this technique worked so well that she taught her calf how to do it. Others also learned this trick and now the group are a regular bunch of gull-baiters. They have learned to **lure** them with the fish they have hidden and to swap their feathery bounty for yet more fishy treats.

This **tale** is a brilliant example of how clever dolphins can be. And, when they happen upon a great idea or just a new game, they can pass on this knowledge to their friends. Kelly's story perfectly **supports** the argument that dolphins do not deserve to be held in concrete tanks to amuse humans.

Now answer these questions in the spaces provided.

- 1 (a) What task do the dolphins do to help at the research centre?

- (b) Why does Kelly hide scraps of paper at the bottom of the tank?

- (c) What did Kelly teach her calf?

- 2 Give the meaning of each of the following words **as it is used in the passage**. In each case give **one** word or short phrase.

(a) spots _____

(b) lure _____

(c) tale _____

(d) supports

- 3 Add the missing punctuation to these sentences.

Do you think dolphins are clever enough to know what we
are thinking asked the spectator The researcher smiled I
dont know she said They are certainly intelligent friendly
and playful

- 4 Re-write this sentence, adding a relative clause with further information from the passage.

Kelly is a clever dolphin.

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- 5 Combine these three sentences into **one** complex sentence.
Do **not** use *and* or *but*.

Dolphins live naturally in both rivers and oceans.

They are very intelligent and playful.

Many dolphins are trained in captivity.

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- 6 Complete this sentence, using **two different** forms of the same verb.

The trainer threw the first fish, which the dolphin _____ in its mouth,
but it did not _____ the second one.

7 Read this extract from a conservation website, and then answer the questions.

There are more than 30 species of dolphin. Most live in oceans across the world, but there are also six species of dolphin which live in fresh water. These are found in rivers in Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Dolphins are generally social animals, sometimes living in groups or 'pods' of several hundred.

A number of dolphin species are classified as critically endangered and more are known to be in serious danger but have yet to be formally assessed. One of the greatest threats to dolphins is getting caught up in fishing nets – which can cause them to drown. This causes the deaths of more than 300,000 cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises and whales) every year. The reduction of the dolphin's prey as a result of unsustainable commercial fishing is another reason for its decline.

In order to communicate, dolphins produce clicking sounds and then receive and interpret the returning echoes, in a process known as 'echolocation'. From this they can tell the size, shape, distance, speed and direction of the objects – especially their favoured food of fish and squid. The noise from naval operations and seismic surveys affects their echolocation, which can cause them to become stranded on shore. Being struck by ships and other sea vessels can also cause serious and even fatal injuries to dolphins.

(a) Make a list of all the dangers to ocean and river dolphins, and the results of these dangers.

[illegible]

- (b) Using **your list**, write a summary of 80–100 words to explain some of the dangers to dolphins, and the results of these dangers. Use **your own words** as much as possible.

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Section B: Writing

- 8 Write an article for a magazine called 'Living Earth', about the harm that pollution is causing the planet.

You could include the following in your article:

- different sorts of pollution – air pollution, water pollution, litter, etc.
- the causes and effects of different sorts of pollution
- ways to raise awareness of the harm that pollution causes – films, websites, fund-raising events, etc.