ls it a Whale?

Objective

Given pictures of various animals, the student will determine which ones are whales. The student will give reasons for their decisions.

Materials

For each student:

- Is It a Whale? Funsheet
- Crayons

Background

Whales are mammals. Characteristics shared with other mammals include the following: Mammals are warm-blooded. That is they maintain a high and constant body temperature independent of the surroundings.

Mammals give live birth. Baby whales, called calves, are born in the water.

Mammals nurse their young. A mother whale's milk is rich in fat, so the calves develop a thick layer of blubber.

Mammals have hair. Although adult whales rarely have hair, young whales may have sparse hairs along the rostrum.

Mammals breathe air. A whale breathes air through nostrils called a blowhole, located on top of the whale's head. When it needs oxygen, a whale surfaces, thrusts its blowhole clear of the water, exhales, and takes a deep breath of air into its lungs.

Although whales live in the sea and have a body shape similar to a fish, whales are not fish. Fish are cold-blooded. That is, a fish's temperature is usually about the sametemperature as that of the water it swims in. Most fish have scales.

Action

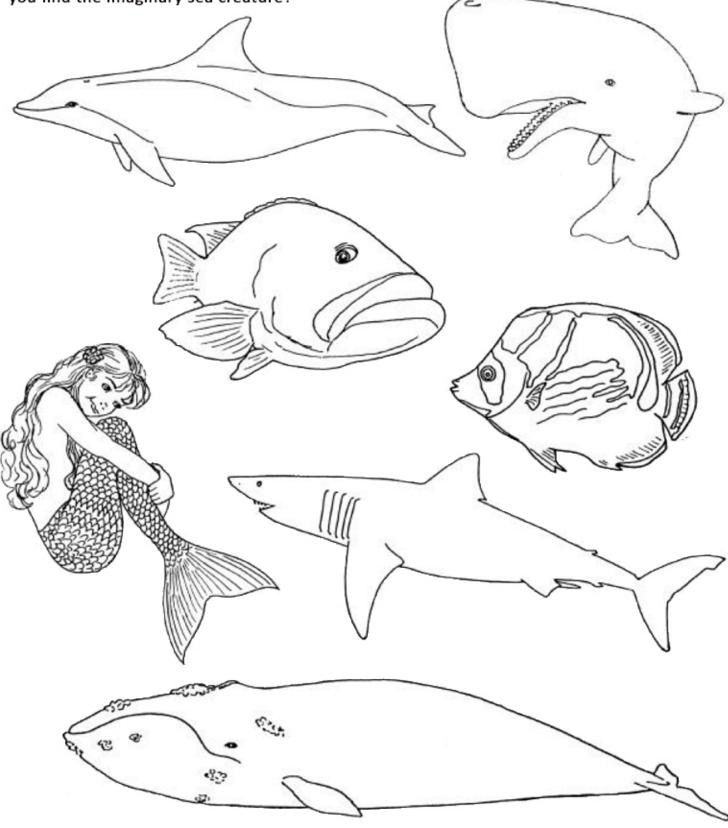
- Explain that whales are mammals that live in the sea. Define what a mammal is for your students, using the background information above. Make a list on the board of words that describe whales. Make a second list of words that describe fish. Circle words that are on both lists.
- 2. Copy and distribute the Is it a Whale? Funsheet.
- Students will circle the animals that are whales and draw an X through the animals that aren't whales. Remind students to look for blowholes and tail orientation (a fish tail or whale flukes) to help them decide what is a whale and what is a fish.
- 4. Discuss why each animal is or isn't a whale. Students may color their funsheets.



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Name

Circle the animals that are whales. Draw an X through animals that are not whales. Can you find the imaginary sea creature?





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