

Have you ever wished you could swim with a whale? Read about one person who did, and answer the questions that follow.

## Swimming With Giants

by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent

Not everyone gets a chance to swim with whales, but I did. Whale researchers Mark Ferrari and Debbie Glockner-Ferrari provided the photographs for my book *Humpback Whales*. They invited me to be their assistant on a research trip. Whale-watching boats for tourists can't get closer than 100 yards to a whale. As researchers, Mark and Debbie have special permission from both the U.S. Government and the state of Hawaii to get right up to the humpbacks.

② Early in the morning, we headed out from a dock on the island of Maui, Hawaii, in a Zodiac—a rubber raft with an outboard motor. Soon, we were near a female whale and her calf. Debbie slipped into the water with the whales, then came back to the surface.

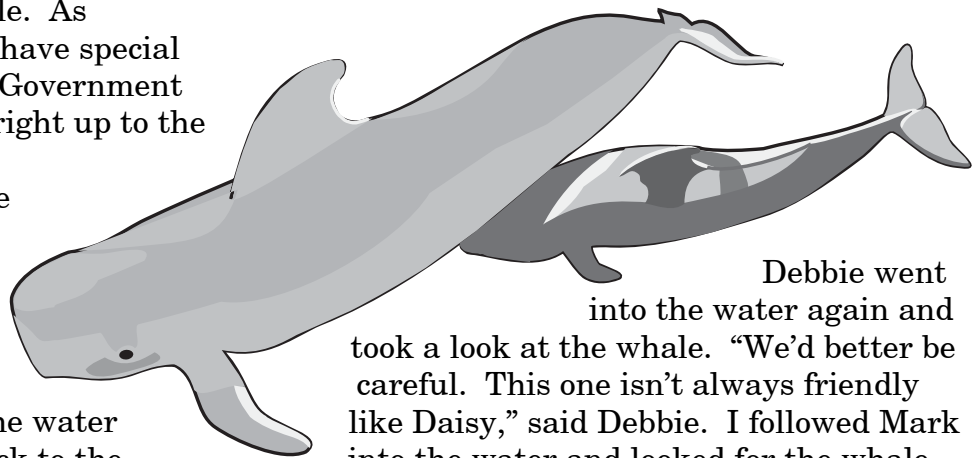
"It's Daisy," said Debbie, "and she has a new calf this year. Come on in, Dorothy—I know this whale, and she's friendly. Just hold tight onto the bowline so we don't lose the raft." Then she dove in to make her scientific observations. Mark slid into the water to take some photos.

④ I slipped into the warm water and dipped in my face mask to discover an enchanting world. Rays of sunlight fanned out in bright, sparkling bands through the blue-green water. The faint sound of a male humpback singing somewhere in the distance added to the sense of mystery.

⑤ Daisy and her calf floated gently near the surface, as if weightless. They turned slowly away from us. I knew from what I'd read that a humpback can get as long as 62 feet. That's more than 10 times as long as I am. Even knowing this, I couldn't get a

sense of Daisy's size or how close she was, because there was no shoreline and no ocean bottom in view—just the emerald water and the graceful whales.

After Daisy and her calf left, we climbed back into the raft and continued to explore. Soon, we met a male humpback.



Debbie went into the water again and took a look at the whale. "We'd better be careful. This one isn't always friendly like Daisy," said Debbie. I followed Mark into the water and looked for the whale. There he was! A bottle-nosed dolphin swam with him. The dolphin, which I knew had to be at least about 12 feet long, looked tiny next to the giant whale. This comparison gave me a sense of how huge that humpback was. After all, it weighed as much as 10 elephants put together. Then the whale started to blow bubbles. "Uh-oh," I thought. I knew that blowing bubbles was a whale's way of saying, "Get out of here!"

The whale turned and swam straight toward me. I could see the neat grooves on its throat and the front of its wide mouth. I clutched the bowline of the raft and swam away from the whale as fast as I could. The whale moved at exactly the same speed I did. Although I was kicking hard, I felt as if I were standing still.

"Don't worry about me, whale. I'm trying to get out of your way," I thought, wishing he could read my mind. But he kept

coming. My legs were getting tired. Where were Mark and Debbie?

Just as I began to feel really frightened, the whale changed course and swam downward, disappearing into the deep green below. I surfaced to hear Mark yelling from inside the raft, "Get into the raft, quick!" I struggled up over the high, slippery side of the Zodiac and collapsed, glad to be safe.

All three of us were now in the raft. "The whales have never hurt us," Debbie said. "But that one clearly wanted us to go away. We'll leave him alone from now on." I believed her. After all, she'd been studying the whales for many years.

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| <p>1. What is the <b>most likely</b> reason the author describes her own experiences in this selection?</p> <p>A so she can convince people that the information is true</p> <p>B so she can show what it is really like to swim with whales</p> <p>C so she can include more information about humpback whales</p> <p>D so she can explain why she was writing a book about whales</p> | <p>3. What kind of place does the author describe in paragraph 4?</p> <p>A a scary place</p> <p>B a dangerous place</p> <p>C a make-believe place</p> <p>D a beautiful place</p>  |
| <p>2. In paragraph 2, the author describes a female whale and her calf. What does the word <i>calf</i> mean?</p> <p>A baby</p> <p>B cow</p> <p>C friend</p> <p>D pet</p>  | <p>4. In paragraph 5, the author writes that Daisy and her calf floated "as if weightless." What does <i>weightless</i> mean?</p> <p>A weighing the most</p> <p>B having more weight</p> <p>C weighing less than before</p> <p>D having no weight</p> |

5. What did the male humpback whale do to warn the swimmers away?
- A blew bubbles
  - B chased the dolphin
  - C made loud noises
  - D opened his mouth
6. Why do Mark Ferrari and Debbie Glockner-Ferrari have special permission to get close to whales?
- A because they are writing a book about whales
  - B because they are taking care of the whales
  - C because they are scientists studying whales
  - D because they are working for the state of Hawaii
7. Which question should be asked to find out more information than the selection gives about whales?
- A How big are adult humpback whales?
  - B Are humpback whales dangerous to humans?
  - C Are humpback whales disappearing from Earth?
  - D Can humpback whales be found near Hawaii?
8. How did the author **most likely** feel when the male humpback whale was swimming toward her?
- A bored
  - B curious
  - C happy
  - D scared
9. Which of the following is **most similar** to the experience described in the selection?
- A A scientist studies monkeys by watching how they live in the jungle.
  - B A student observes a lion family at the zoo.
  - C A researcher discovers a new way to communicate with elephants.
  - D A fisherman goes to where most fish like to swim to catch them.

### End of Set

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*Answers to*  
*Grade 4 Reading Comprehension Sample Items*

<b>Passage Title</b>	<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Correct Answer</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Thinking Skill</b>	<b>Objective Number</b>
Swimming With Giants	1	B	Critical Stance	Analyzing	3.01
Swimming With Giants	2	A	Cognition	Analyzing	1.03
Swimming With Giants	3	D	Interpretation	Analyzing	3.03
Swimming With Giants	4	D	Cognition	Knowledge	1.02
Swimming With Giants	5	A	Cognition	Knowledge	2.04
Swimming With Giants	6	C	Interpretation	Analyzing	2.05
Swimming With Giants	7	C	Critical Stance	Analyzing	2.02
Swimming With Giants	8	D	Interpretation	Analyzing	2.04
Swimming With Giants	9	A	Connections	Analyzing	2.02