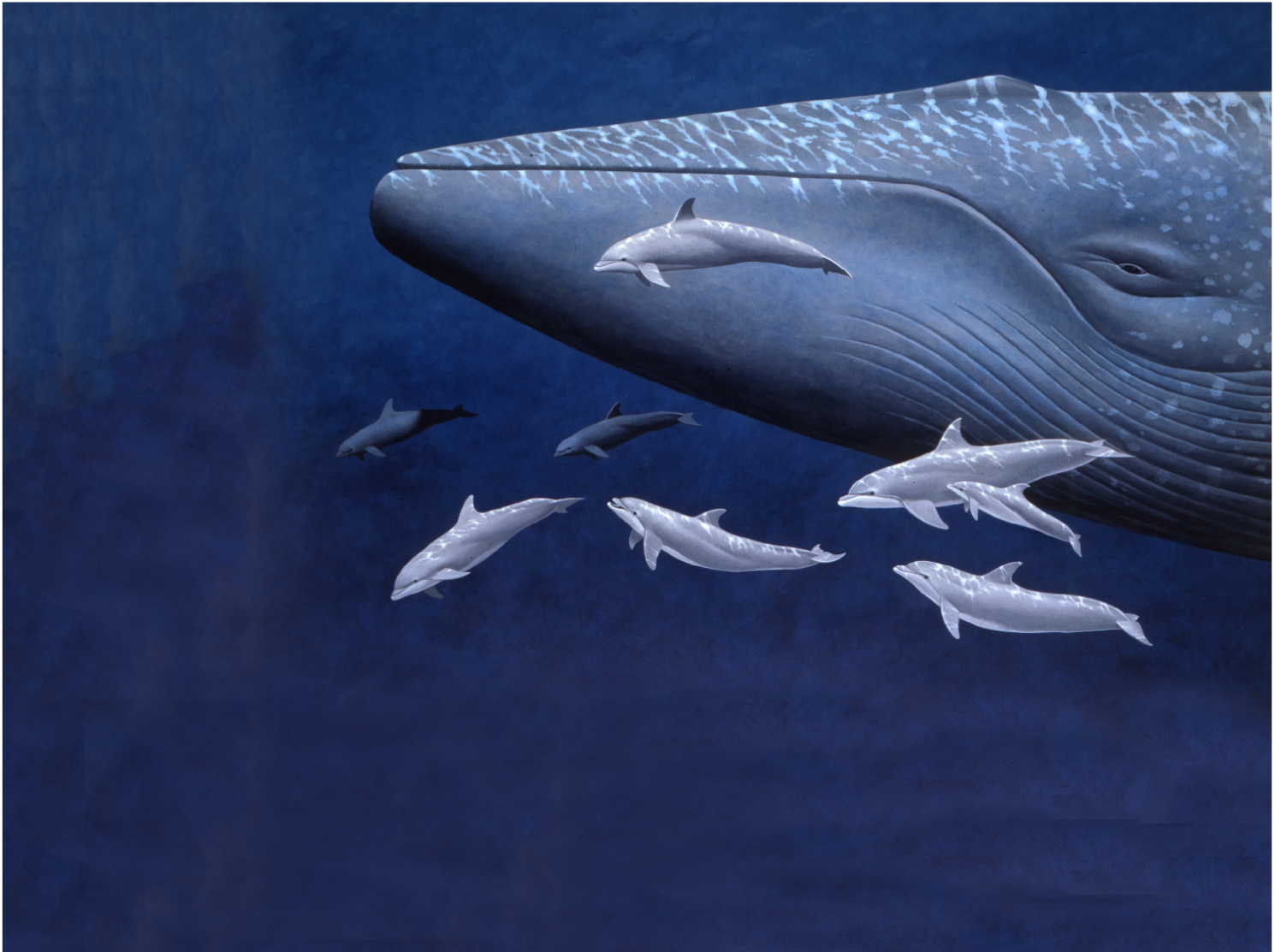


NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

WHALES GIANTS OF THE OCEAN

Facilitator's Guide - Lesson 3.0 What Are Cetaceans?

Lesson time: 30 minutes



Cetaceans are an important group of animals that live in the ocean, and in a few instances, in fresh and brackish water. This lesson will explain the traits they have in common, and the features that define the categories of whale, dolphin and porpoise.

WELCOME!

This facilitator's guide will assist you as you lead *Whales: Giants of the Ocean- What Are Cetaceans?*. This lesson, which is taught via this [presentation](#), serves as the transition from Lesson 2 into Lesson 3.1. These resources can also be found on the New Bedford Whaling Museum website at www.whalingmuseum.org/

GUIDING QUESTION

What characteristics and adaptations are shared by all cetaceans?

BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Identify distinguishing features of cetaceans
- Understand the distinctions among whales, dolphins and porpoises.
- Be able to distinguish between cetaceans and other organisms according to their physical features.



KEY TERMS

Whale, dolphin, porpoise, mammal, aquatic, blubber, taxonomy



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This lesson has been developed to provide an overview of the defining characteristics of whales and their genetic kin. It will also provide an introduction to the variety of cetaceans on the planet.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- [What Are Cetaceans?](#)



ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- NGSS| LS1.A Cross-Cutting Concepts: Systems and Models; Structures and Function; Science and Engineering Practices: Asking Questions and Defining Problems
- COMMON CORE| **ELA** RI.4.4, SL.4.1, SL.4.2

LESSON DIRECTIONS



INTRODUCTION

Explain to students that they will be learning about the characteristics that are shared by all cetaceans, i.e. whales, dolphins and porpoises. They will also explore the basic characteristics that separate the three groups of cetaceans.



ACTIVITY

- Open the [What Are Cetaceans?](#)
- Go through the slides with the students. You may want to go through the slides once on your own before showing them to the students.
- In slides 6 and 7, the most important features are the illustrations, not the scientific family names. These two slides are included to show some of the variety within cetaceans.
- Slides 8 and 9 are an activity for using what they've just learned to distinguish between cetaceans and other animals.



WRAPPING UP

- Discuss any animals or terms that were confusing to the students. What was the source of the confusion?



Have more time?

Need Additional Resources?

- [Video Footage of Cetaceans](#)
- [External Anatomy Explanation](#)



Ready for the next lesson?

[Lesson 3.1| Animal Classification](#)

