

What Do Whales Feel?

- A. Some senses in Cetaceans are reduced or are absent or don't work in water, but we and other terrestrial mammals take these for granted. For example, toothed species are unable to smell which is evident from their brain structure. On the other hand, Baleen species have some similar brain structures but it is not understood whether these are functional. As the blowholes evolved and migrated to the top of the head it has been speculated that the neural pathways serving a sense of smell may have been nearly all sacrificed. The nerves serving these have degenerated or are rudimentary even though some cetaceans have taste buds.
- B. The sense of touch has been sometimes reported to be weak too, but it is mostly mistaken. Trainers comment on their captive dolphins and small whales' responsiveness to being touched or rubbed. Free-ranging and captive cetacean individuals of all species (particularly adults and calves, or members of the same subgroup) appear to make frequent contact. Stroking or touching are part of the courtship ritual in most species and this contact may help to maintain order within a group. Captive animals often object to being touched around the area of the blowhole as it is sensitive there.
- C. The sense of vision is developed in different species to different degrees. Baleen species, specifically a grey whale calf, studied in captivity at close quarters underwater for a year, and humpback whales and free-ranging right whales, studied and filmed off Argentina and Hawaii, have tracked objects with vision underwater, and they can see to a certain extent both in water and in air. However, the position of the eyes limits the field of vision in baleen whales that do not have stereoscopic vision.
- D. The position of the eyes in most dolphins and porpoises on the other hand, indicates that they have stereoscopic vision downward and forward. The eye position in freshwater dolphins, which often swim upside down or on their side while feeding, suggests that the vision they have is stereoscopic upward and forward. In comparison, the bottlenose dolphin has extremely keen eyesight in water. Judging from the way it tracks and watches the flying fish, it can also see well through the air-water interface as well. Even though the initial experimental evidence indicates that their vision in air is low, the precision with which dolphins spring high to catch small fish out of a trainer's hand gives anecdotal evidence to the contrary.
- E. With no doubt these variations can be explained with reference to the habitats in which individual species have grown. For example, to species inhabiting clear open waters, vision is more useful than to those living in turbid rivers and flooded plains. For instance, the Chinese beiji and South American boutu appear to have very limited sight, and the Indian susus are blind, their eyes reduced to slits that mostly allow them to recognise only the intensity of light and direction.
- F. Even though the sense of taste and smell appear to have declined, and vision in water appears to be unknown, such shortcomings are compensated for by cetaceans' well-developed auditory sense. Most species are highly vocal, although they vary in the range of voice they generate, and many hunt their prey using echolocation. Primarily large baleen whales use lower frequencies and are often restricted in their repertoire. The song-like choruses of bowhead whales in summer and the complex, haunting utterances of the humpback whales are notable exceptions. Toothed species in general produce a wider variety of sounds and more frequency spectrum than baleen species (though the sperm whale apparently produces a monotonous series of high-energy clicks and little else). Some of the more complicated sounds are clearly communicative. The role they play in the 'culture' and social life of cetaceans has been more of a wild speculation than of solid science.

What Do Whales Feel IELTS reading questions

Questions 1-5

Complete the notes below.

Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/ OR A NUMBER from the passage for each answer.

Toothed species are unable to **1**_____.

Blowholes evolved and migrated to the top of the **2**_____.

Captive animals often object to being touched around the area of the **3**_____.

The sense of **4**_____ is developed in different species to different degrees.

The bottlenose dolphin has an extremely keen **5**_____ in water.

Questions 6-9

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the Reading Passage?

Write

YES if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer

NO, if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer

NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

6. Stroking or touching may help to maintain order within a group.

7. Captive animals like being touched around the area of the blowhole

8. Dolphins live up to the age of 30.

9. Chinese Beiji and South American Boutu have very limited sight.

Questions 10-15

The reading passage has six paragraphs, A-F.

Choose the correct heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, i-vii, as your answer to each question.

- i. Habitat of whales
- ii. Absence of senses in Cetaceans
- iii. Voice of whales
- iv. Responsiveness to touch
- v. Position of eyes
- vi. The size of whales
- vii. Sense of vision

10. Paragraph A
11. Paragraph B
12. Paragraph C
13. Paragraph D
14. Paragraph E
15. Paragraph F

What Do Whales Feel IELTS reading answers with explanations

(Note: The text in italics is from the reading passage and shows the location from where the answer is taken or inferred. The text in the regular font explains the answer in detail.)

1. *smell*

Explanation: For example, *toothed species are unable to smell which is evident from their brain structure.*

2. *head*

Explanation: *As the blowholes evolved and migrated to the top of the head it has been speculated that the neural pathways serving a sense of smell may have been nearly all sacrificed.*

3. *blowhole*

Explanation: *Captive animals often object to being touched around the area of the blowhole as it is sensitive there.*

4. *vision*

Explanation: *The sense of vision is developed in different species to different degrees.*

5. eyesight

Explanation: In comparison, the bottlenose dolphin has extremely keen eyesight in water.

6. Yes

Explanation: Stroking or touching are part of the courtship ritual in most species and this contact may help to maintain order within a group.

7. No

Explanation: Captive animals often object to being touched around the area of the blowhole as it is sensitive there.

8. Not given

Explanation: The answer to the question is not given in the passage.

9. Yes

Explanation: For instance, the Chinese beiji and South American bouu appear to have very limited sight, and the Indian susus are blind, their eyes reduced to slits that mostly allow them to recognise only the intensity of light and direction.

10. Paragraph A = ii

Explanation: Some senses in Cetaceans are reduced or are absent or don't work in water, but we and other terrestrial mammals take these for granted.

11. Paragraph B = iv

Explanation: The sense of touch has been sometimes reported to be weak too, but it is mostly mistaken.

12. Paragraph C = vii

Explanation: The sense of vision is developed in different species to different degrees.

13. Paragraph D = v

Explanation: The position of the eyes in most dolphins and porpoises on the other hand, indicates that they have stereoscopic vision downward and forward.

14. Paragraph E = i

Explanation: *With no doubt these variations can be explained with reference to the habitats in which individual species have grown.*

15. Paragraph F = iii

Explanation: *Most species are highly vocal, although they vary in the range of voice they generate, and many hunt their prey using echolocation.*