

A Family Reunion

In July [2002], a group of orcas swam to a beach in western Canada. There, they rubbed their bellies on the smooth pebbles along the beach. The group included a young female orca named Springer.

Orca Facts

- An orca is sometimes called a killer whale.
- A male orca can grow to weigh 9 tons.
- An orca is a mammal that breathes air.
- Orcas are not whales. They are dolphins.

The following January, a lone orca was spotted in Puget Sound near Washington state. Scientists figured out that the orca was about 2 years old and that she had been orphaned.

During spring, the orphaned orca stayed in Puget Sound. She swam near boats, and many people got to see her. They named her Springer.

As the months passed, the orca became sickly. She developed a skin rash. Scientists then captured Springer. They treated the rash, and Springer got better.

Like Peas in a Pod



NOAA
Orca

After Springer had recovered, scientists decided that they should return the orca to the ocean. Before releasing her, they attached a radio transmitter to Springer. The radio allows scientists to track her.

In July, wildlife experts loaded Springer onto a jet-powered boat. The boat traveled about 400 miles north to western Canada. Scientists knew that a pod, or group of orcas, related to Springer was there.

Springer was put back into the ocean. Soon scientists saw her swimming with her pod. An aunt and three cousins are part of the pod. Springer's family reunion seemed to be a happy one.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Why did the scientists travel 400 miles with Springer before releasing her back into the ocean?

- A they wanted to track her with a radio transmitter
- B they wanted to go a long distance with their jet-powered boat
- C they wanted to take her to a pod of orcas from her family
- D they thought it would be better to take her to Canada

2. Which of the following events occurred **last** in the passage?

- A scientists decided to return Springer to the ocean
- B scientists helped Springer by treating her skin rash
- C scientists saw Springer swimming with her family
- D scientists figured out that Springer had no mother

3. What word would the author probably use to describe Springer's personality?

- A friendly
- B sickly
- C sad
- D dangerous

4. Read the following sentences and answer the question below: "The following January, a lone orca was spotted in Puget Sound near Washington state. Scientists figured out that the orca was about 2 years old and that she had been orphaned."

What does the word **lone** mean?

- A needing money
- B being the only one
- C having fun
- D swimming very slowly

5. What would be another good title for this passage?

- A Saving Springer
- B Dolphins vs. Whales
- C Puget Sound in Washington State
- D Peas in a Pod

6. Why did the scientists attach a radio transmitter to Springer before they released her into the ocean?

7. Discuss two ways that the scientists helped Springer.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Scientists decided to capture Springer _____ Springer had a skin rash that they wanted to treat.

- A but
- B because
- C so
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

People in boats saw Springer the orca swimming in Puget Sound.

Who? people in boats

(saw) What? _____

Where? _____

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary Word: orphaned (or · phaned): not having parents.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **orphaned**.

1. If children are orphaned, they need a new family to take care of them.
2. Although Springer was an orphan, she did have other family, including an aunt and cousins.
3. It was very sad that the baby birds were orphans when their mother died in the storm.
4. The puppy did not have parents, so she was an orphan.
5. Sometimes a zoo or wildlife center will care for orphaned animals.

10b. Circle the following image that most closely demonstrates an orphaned bear.



11. If a child has a mother but the father has died, is it orphaned? Why or why not?
