



Beluga Whales at the Aquarium

Level H / 135 words / informational

High frequency words:

all, be, made, their, they, white

Before reading

- Look at the cover and read the title. Call attention to the informational text features within the text: bold words, glossary, photographs, labeled illustration.
- Possible discussion questions: “Where have you seen a beluga whale? What do you know about belugas? What do you want to know about belugas?”
- Fill in the first two columns of a KWL chart on beluga whales. Fill in the K section with what students already KNOW about belugas and fill in the W section with WHAT they would like to learn about belugas.

Look through all the pictures

- Using the language in the story, discuss each photograph in the book. Notice details in the pictures and use that information to better understand the text.
- Help the children find any tricky words in the text: *beluga, blowhole, blubber, breathe, and melon*. Notice that *blowhole* is a compound word.

Reading the text

- Have the children read the text independently. While they’re reading, listen to and prompt each student to use meaning, structure, and visual information to figure out words, self-correct, or improve expression.
- Introduce and discuss graphic organizers. A graphic organizer provides a visual representation of information, concepts, or ideas to help children understand and organize what they are reading.

After reading

- Discuss the meaning, structure, and letter cues that you notice students using correctly.

- **Literal comprehension:** The answers are in the text. Ask, “What is the purpose of the beluga whale’s melon? How does a beluga whale breathe?” Have students read the pages that support their answers.
- **Inferential comprehension:** The answers are in your head. Ask, “Why do you think a beluga whale makes so many different sounds? Why do you think beluga whales like to be with other beluga whales?”

Word work

- Have the students locate the high-frequency words in the text and practice writing them.
- Point out the apostrophe in the word *beluga’s*. Explain that the ‘s means possession.
- Find and discuss the word *noise* with the /oi/ digraph. Make other words that sound the same (*coin, foil, point*).

Rereading for fluency

- Have the child(ren) read the story again aloud, listening for phrased, fluent oral reading that includes appropriate pausing, intonation, and word stress.

Writing activity

- Have each student complete the L section of the KWL chart with what they have LEARNED about beluga whales after reading this book. Have them share what they’ve learned with each other.

FUN FACT

Beluga whales are nicknamed *sea canaries* because they are extremely vocal.

Belugas make many different sounds, including: whistles, clicks, mews, bleats, chirps, and bell tones.

Teaching Points: Introducing nonfiction/informational texts; Introducing the KWL graphic organizer; Introducing new words; Noticing compound words; Introducing possessive words with the ‘s ending; Practicing the /oi/ digraph; Rereading.