

Name: _____

How to Pet a Dolphin

By Anita Nahta Amin



“Look at the dolphins!” Jordan raced to the aquarium tank with his twin sister, Dani. He propped his elbows on the rim of the tank and leaned forward on his tip toes.

This was the closest he'd ever been to a dolphin. Sometimes when he and his family had gone ocean sailing, dolphins had chased their boat, but the dolphins had always been too far away and too fast to touch.

“I can't wait to touch one,” Dani said, reaching out for a dolphin just as it swam away. She frowned.

“Maybe this will help,” Mom said, stopping beside them with Dad.

Jordan's parents held out small white paper trays of crayon-sized silver fish.

“This is food for the dolphins,” Dad explained.

Dani grabbed one of the trays and raced to the other side of the tank, where it was less crowded.

Jordan made a face at the fish in his tray. Ew, he thought. They were smelly and looked slimy and squishy. He studied the dolphins and wondered if they felt slimy too. When he heard laughter, he craned his neck past several people to watch Dani, who was waving one of her fish in the air.

A guide stopped beside Jordan. The guide said, “Hold your fish above the water and drop it in the dolphin's mouth. That's the best time to pet a dolphin.”

Jordan held his breath as he pinched a fish between his thumb and index finger. He dangled it over the water.

A dolphin swam up to him and opened its mouth. Jordan pulled his hand slightly back and paused. What if the dolphin swallowed his hand, too?

"It's okay," the guide said. "It won't bite you."

Jordan glanced at the guide, and then at Dani, who was already petting a dolphin. Jordan dropped the fish into the dolphin's mouth and briefly touched its light gray back. It felt slippery and smooth. "Oh, cool!" he cried.

A big splash soaked Jordan as the dolphin glided away. "Aah!" He laughed and wrung his t-shirt. Jordan quickly held out another fish and smiled as he pet another dolphin.

Soon Jordan's tray was empty. Dolphin after dolphin passed just barely out of reach. They were all traveling to Dani, who had a waiting line of dolphins.

"Hey, over here!" Jordan shouted to the dolphins. He reached his hand out over the salty water in the tank.

"Dolphins can't hear you," the guide said. "They hear on a higher pitch."

Jordan whistled. A couple of dolphins swam by but didn't stop. His shoulders slumped. Then he shrugged and ran to his sister. "Dani, that was so cool!"

"I know!" Dani grinned. She threw a fish into a dolphin's mouth and

rubbed its back. Dani picked up her last fish. "You want it?"

Jordan paused. "No, you do it."

"Okay." Dani tossed the fish to the next dolphin and pet it.

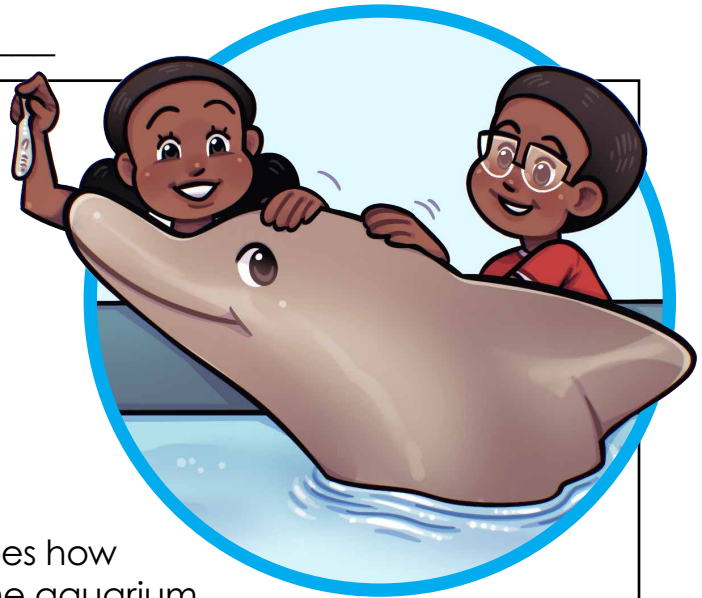
Then, Jordan wrapped his arm around Dani's shoulder. They giggled and ran out of the park.



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1. Choose the best pair of words that describes how Jordan feels before he pets a dolphin at the aquarium.
a. enthusiastic and fearless **b.** excited and uncertain
c. bored and uninterested **d.** curious and tearful
2. According to the reading passage, why does Dani move to the other side of the dolphin tank? (Use a complete sentence.)

3. What is Jordan afraid will happen when he feeds a dolphin?
a. The dolphin will swim away too quickly for him to pet it.
b. The dolphin will not be interested in taking his fish.
c. The dolphin will bite his hand.
d. The dolphin will splash him and get his clothes wet.
4. Jordan uses his senses to observe the fish he is given to feed the dolphins. Circle each of the senses Jordan uses to observe the fish.

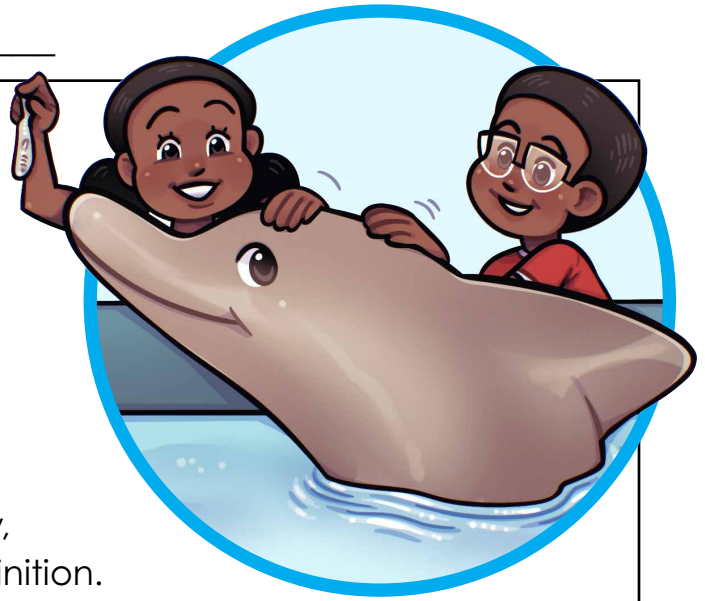
taste smell sound touch sight

5. When Jordan calls out to the dolphins, the guide informs him that the dolphins cannot hear him. In your own words, explain why the dolphins cannot hear human voices, using complete sentences.

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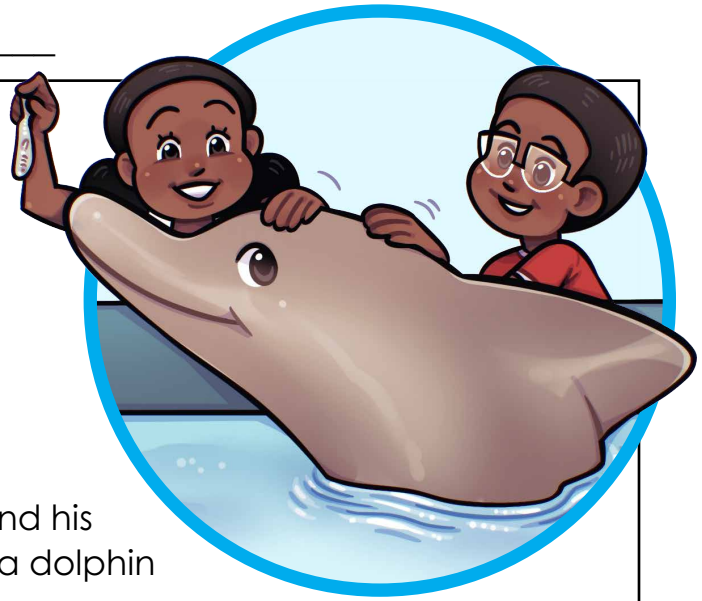
Match each vocabulary word from the story, "How to Pet a Dolphin," with the correct definition.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. _____ squishy | a. stretched one's neck in order to see something better |
| 2. _____ briefly | b. raised one's shoulders up and down |
| 3. _____ wrung | c. having a soft and wet texture |
| 4. _____ aquarium | d. held out in front of someone or something; swung loosely |
| 5. _____ swallowed | e. lasting for only a moment |
| 6. _____ dangled | f. how high or low a tone is |
| 7. _____ slippery | g. ate or gulped something down |
| 8. _____ craned | h. twisted in order to squeeze water out of something |
| 9. _____ pitch | i. having a texture that is smooth or slick |
| 10. _____ shrugged | j. a glass enclosure for aquatic animals |

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In the story, "How to Pet a Dolphin," Jordan and his sister, Dani, experience what it's like to touch a dolphin for the first time.

Using the lines below, describe an encounter you had with an animal at the aquarium, zoo, or even a nearby farm. What was it like to see that animal up close? Were you allowed to touch the animal? Describe your experience using complete sentences.

ANSWER KEY

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1. Choose the best pair of words that describes how Jordan feels before he pets a dolphin at the aquarium.
 - a. enthusiastic and fearless
 - b. excited and uncertain**
 - c. bored and uninterested
 - d. curious and tearful
2. According to the reading passage, why does Dani move to the other side of the dolphin tank? (Use a complete sentence.)

Dani moves to the other side of the tank because it is less crowded. She will have a better chance to pet a dolphin.

3. What is Jordan afraid will happen when he feeds a dolphin?
 - a. The dolphin will swim away too quickly for him to pet it.
 - b. The dolphin will not be interested in taking his fish.
 - c. The dolphin will bite his hand.**
 - d. The dolphin will splash him and get his clothes wet.
4. Jordan uses his senses to observe the fish he is given to feed the dolphins. Circle each of the senses Jordan uses to observe the fish.

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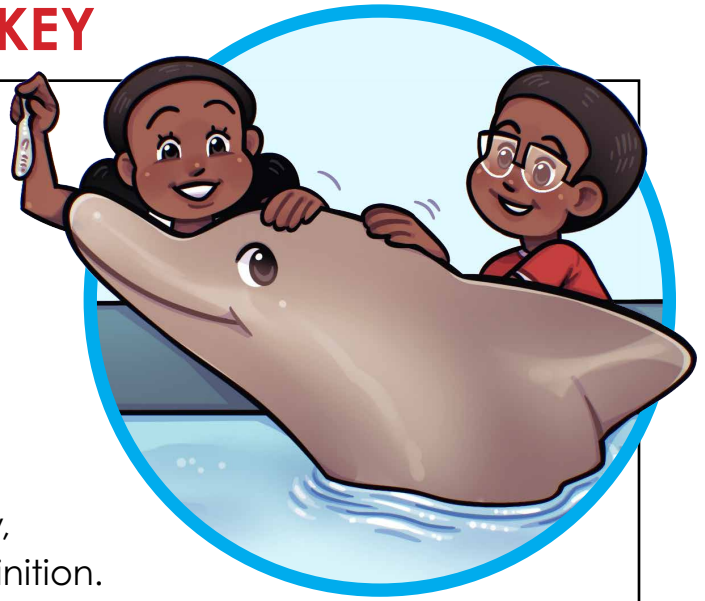
5. When Jordan calls out to the dolphins, the guide informs him that the dolphins cannot hear him. In your own words, explain why the dolphins cannot hear human voices, using complete sentences.

Dolphins cannot hear human voices because they hear on a higher pitch than humans speak.

ANSWER KEY

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Match each vocabulary word from the story, "How to Pet a Dolphin," with the correct definition.

1. c. squishy
2. e. briefly
3. h. wrung
4. j. aquarium
5. g. swallowed
6. d. dangled
7. i. slippery
8. a. craned
9. f. pitch
10. b. shrugged
- a. stretched one's neck in order to see something better
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