

## **NARWHAL Reading Comprehension**

The narwhal is a medium-size whale that lives in the Arctic region year-round. It is characterized by its single, straight tusk, which is actually an elongated canine (tooth) that grows to a length of ten feet. Normally, such tusks are unique to males. Occasionally, a male narwhal will have two tusks. The tusk functions as a sensory organ and is rarely, if ever, used for aggressive or defensive purposes. The narwhal itself can grow to about 18 feet in length, but most average about 13 feet. Narwhals can weigh up to 3,500 pounds.

The word “narwhal” comes from an old Norse (from Norway) word meaning “corpse.” The narwhal’s grayish, drab coloration reminded sailors of a dead body.

The narwhal feeds on Arctic fish such as cod and halibut, as well as shrimp and squid. Because narwhals lack teeth, it is thought that they swim toward their prey and suck it into their mouths.

Narwhals are a migratory species of whale. They migrate to shallow, ice-free coastal waters in the spring in pods (groups) of 10–100 individuals. In winter, they move to deeper waters under pack ice. Narwhals can dive to depths of over 2,500 feet and can stay underwater for 25 minutes or more. Their dives are among the deepest ever recorded for marine mammals. They use sonar to guide themselves through the murky depths.

Scientists believe there are about 75,000 narwhals living in the Arctic waters. Individuals in the wild can live up to 50 years. Narwhals are thought to be extremely sensitive to climate change and reduced pack ice in Arctic waters.

**1.) Based on the passage, which is the best definition for the word “migratory?”**

- a.) Something that travels
- b.) Something that stays in one place
- c.) Something that is rare
- d.) Something that hunts

**2.) If the answer to a question is “13 feet,” what is the question?**

- a.) How long can the narwhal grow?
- b.) What is the average length of a narwhal?
- c.) How long is the narwhal tusk?
- d.) How much longer is the male narwhal than the female?

**3.) The narwhal CANNOT...**

- a.) live up to 45 years.
- b.) grow to weigh more than 3,500 pounds.
- c.) grow to a length of 15 feet.
- d.) stay underwater for 20 minutes.

**4.) Based on the passage, which of the following might be harmful to the narwhal population?**

- a.) more sea ice
- b.) less sea ice
- c.) more polar bears
- d.) colder waters

**5.) What is the narwhal’s tusk used for?**

- a.) To scare off predators
- b.) As a sensory organ
- c.) To fight other narwhals
- d.) To hunt

**6.) Which of the following would not fit the PROFILE of a narwhal?**

- a.) A narwhal migrating to shallow waters in the spring
- b.) A narwhal using sonar
- c.) A narwhal swimming in icy waters
- d.) A narwhal using its teeth to tear prey

**7.) Which of the following words is an ANTONYM of “murky” as used in the following sentence:**

They use sonar to guide themselves through the murky depths.

- a.) clear
- b.) noisy
- c.) muddy
- d.) fast

**8.) The narwhal’s tusk...**

- a.) is actually a long tooth.
- b.) is longer than its body.
- c.) is longer in females.
- d.) is the same size as its body.

**9.) Where would you find the answer to “What does the narwhal eat?”**

- a.) second paragraph
- b.) third paragraph
- c.) concluding paragraph
- d.) introductory paragraph

**10.) Where are narwhals in the winter?**

- a.) under pack ice in shallow waters
- b.) under pack ice in deep waters
- c.) in ice-free deep waters
- d.) in ice-free shallow waters