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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



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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



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shoulders stamped. 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



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- 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.

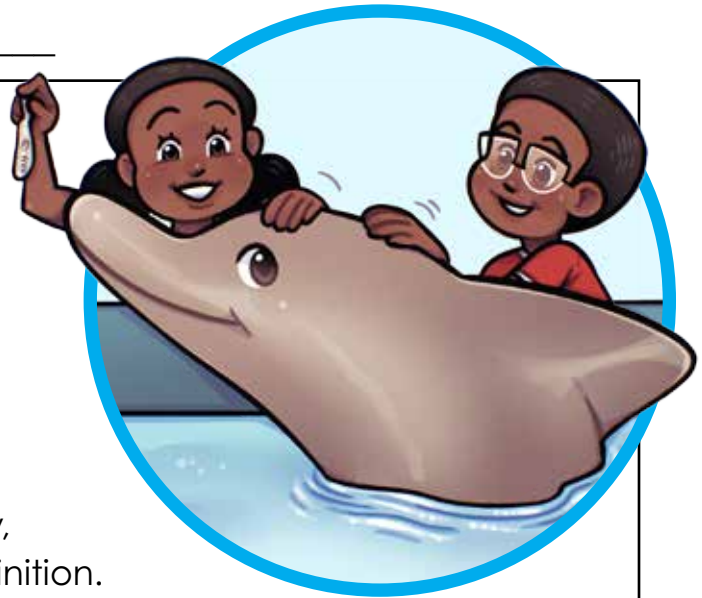
taste smell sound touch sight

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



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5. _____ swallowed
6. _____ dangled
7. _____ slippery
8. _____ craned
9. _____ pitch
10. _____ shrugged
- e. lasting for only a moment
- f. how high or low a tone is
- g. ate or gulped something down
- h. twisted in order to squeeze water out of something
- i. having a texture that is smooth or slick
- j. a glass enclosure for aquatic animals

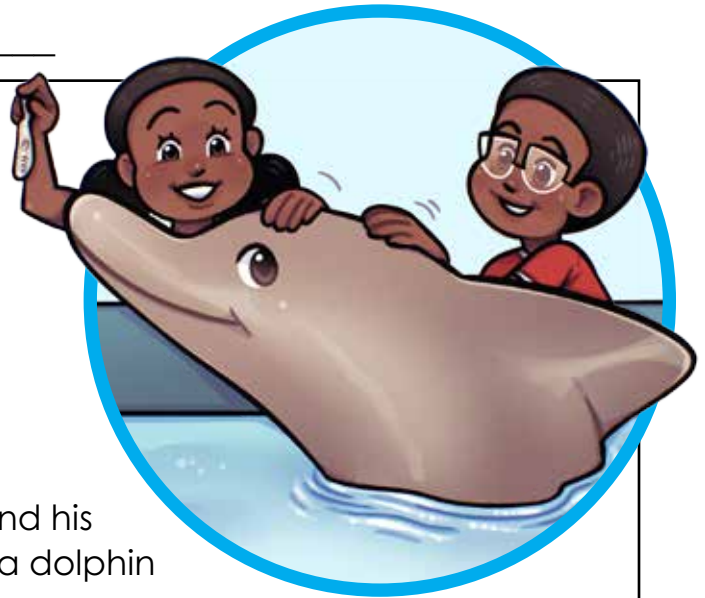
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In the story, "How to Pet a Dolphin," Jordan and his sister, Dani, experience what it's like to touch a dolphin for the first time.

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



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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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9. **f.** pitch

i. having a texture that is smooth or slick

10. **b.** shrugged

j. a glass enclosure for aquatic animals