

# 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?

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7. Discuss two ways that the scientists helped Springer.

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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?

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## Teacher Guide &amp; Answers

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 760

**Featured Text Structure:** Sequence – the writer provides an order of events or steps in a process

**Passage Summary:** The passage tells the story of Springer, a young orca who was separated from and then reunited with her family of orcas. The passage describes how Springer was found alone in Puget Sound, captured and helped by scientists, and finally returned to her pod.

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5. What would be another good title for this passage?
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    - D Peas in a Pod
  6. Why did the scientists attach a radio transmitter to Springer before they released her into the ocean?

**Suggested answer:** The scientists attached a radio transmitter to Springer so that they would be able to track her or know where she is in the ocean. [paragraph #5]

7. Discuss two ways that the scientists helped Springer.

**Suggested answer:** The scientists captured Springer after they realized she was sick with a skin rash, and they treated her rash and helped her get better. The scientists also released Springer back into the ocean so she could join her family again. [paragraphs #4, 5-7]

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? **Springer the orca**

Where? **in Puget Sound**

10. ReadWorks recommends that the following vocabulary word be taught to the whole class out loud using the steps below.

**Vocabulary Word:** orphaned

**Step 1:** Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (or · phaned)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is orphaned. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "orphaned."]

**Step 2:** Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Orphaned means not having parents."
- b. Teacher says: "In this passage, Springer is orphaned, meaning that she had lost her mother and was by herself. We can talk about animals or about children being orphaned, but in this passage the word is used to describe Springer the orca."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "orphaned."]

**Step 3: Practice the word**

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the first sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

- 10a.**
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.

**Step 4:** Check for student understanding.

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 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?

**Suggested answer:** No because in order to be an orphan, a child or offspring must have lost both parents.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary:* lone, sickly, rash