

# Compare and Contrast Whales

**Directions:** Read the passages below and then complete the Venn diagram with information from the two texts.

## Blue Whales

Blue whales are the largest animals currently on Earth. These whales can grow up to 100 feet long and weigh up to 200 tons.

Just what do these large animals eat? Their diet consists only of tiny shrimp-like animals called krill. After taking a big gulp of seawater, the blue whale's massive tongue forces the water out of its mouth through its baleen\*. Only the krill is left behind and swallowed. A blue whale can eat up to four tons of krill in a single day.

Blue whales have been found in every ocean of the world. Since whales live in the ocean, they are marine animals. They swim in small groups but are usually found alone or in pairs. During winter you will find whales moving to a new place. Animals migrate, or move to a different place, for many reasons. Blue whales migrate to eat and have their young in warmer waters.

Blue whales are endangered. This means they are threatened by extinction\*. During the early 1900s people would hunt for the blue whale to use its oil for lamps and other things. The blue whale can live up to ninety years.

\***baleen:** a hard substance in the mouths of some whales that is attached to their jaw and hangs down and "locks" together.

\***extinction:** When an animal goes extinct, that means it is no longer anywhere in the world. They have all died out.

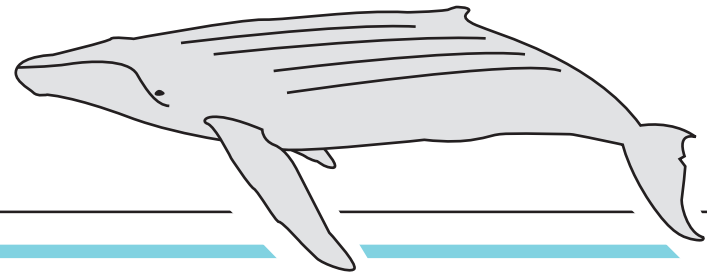
## Whales

There are two different kinds of whales. Some whales have teeth, while others filter plankton through a part in their upper jaw called baleen. It is made of keratin, like our fingernails.

The largest whales are blue whales, which grow up to 100 feet in length and 200 tons in weight. They are the largest animal known to have ever existed, even larger than dinosaurs!

Whales are mammals, so they breathe air, are warm-blooded, nurse their young, and have body hair. They have a layer of fat under their skin called blubber that helps keep them warm in the cold ocean water. They breathe through their blowholes by shooting air out of the blowholes and then inhaling into their lungs. Most dives underwater are only five to eight minutes long, but the blue whale can hold its breath for up to 40 minutes, and deep divers like bottlenose dolphins and sperm whales can stay underwater for 90 to 120 minutes.

Whales are estimated to live up to 77 years old, but scientists are not sure if that number is correct. Some people say that whales have been known to live up to 150 years old!



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Compare and Contrast Whales

To **compare** is to say how something is similar to, or the same as, something else. This information goes in the center of the Venn diagram.

To **contrast** is to say how something is different from something else. This information goes in the outer circles of the Venn diagram.

