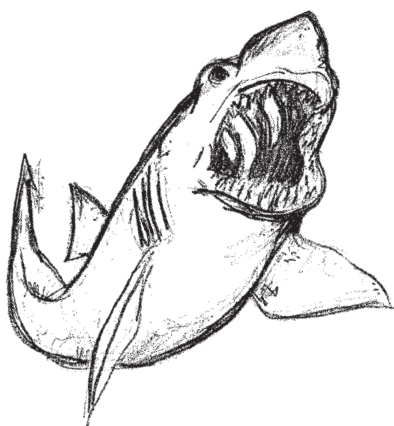


THE GREAT WHITE SHARK**Before reading . . .**

Great white sharks are large-brained, highly intelligent creatures. But their bloodthirsty image has often been used to justify slaughter. Every year, many great whites are killed. Attitudes are changing, however. The species is now protected in California and South Africa.



The streamlined body of the great white shark makes it one of the fastest—and most dangerous—fish in the sea. The great white is the largest of all predatory sharks. It can reach a length of more than 20 feet and weigh more than 7,000 pounds.

The great white shark is one of the most efficient predators on earth. It can locate its prey with astounding accuracy and kill it with a single, devastating bite. It is the only shark that regularly attacks warmblooded animals, such as seals and dolphins. Its diet also includes squid, sea turtles, seabirds, and whale carcasses. Experts say that great whites are always hungry. No matter how much they eat, they are never satisfied.

In spite of their bad reputation, great white sharks rarely attack people. Each year, three times as many people are killed by lightning as are killed by sharks. And 100 more people die from bee stings each year than from shark bites. Most human victims of shark attacks survive. According to scientists, this suggests that the great white dislikes human flesh.

The great white's teeth are broad, sharp, and serrated like steak knives. On a scale of hardness, their teeth rank with steel. When they do get worn out, they shear off cleanly. Then sharp new teeth move up from behind to replace them.

A great white can hear sounds from a mile away. Through small pores in its snout, it can pick up electrical nerve signals in its prey. Other sensors can detect blood in the water. The great white is also well-equipped to see in the dim underwater light. Just before an

attack, its big black eyes roll back into their sockets for protection. And a hungry shark often pokes its head out of the water. Why? To sniff the air for scent of prey.

The great white shark never gets sick. It has mysterious antibodies that make it immune to practically every known bacterial invader. It is also one of the few animals known to be completely immune to cancer.

The great white shark roams at large in many of the world's seas and oceans. It is mainly found off the coasts of North America, Australia, southern Africa, New Zealand, Japan, and parts of the Mediterranean. It spends most of its time around reefs—where there are plenty of fish and sea mammals.

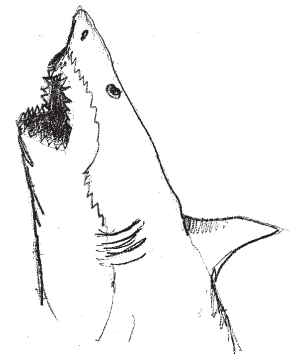
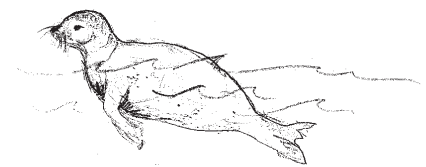
The great white prefers temperate water. It is very rare in polar and tropical regions. It has been known, however, to sometimes wander as far north as Alaska.

Great whites never stop swimming. They swim at a slow pace, without wasting energy. One reason for this is that their prey is often widely scattered. Sometimes great whites go without food for weeks or even months. They must keep moving in search of prey. They also need to keep swimming to force oxygenated water through their gills.

The female great white gives birth in an unusual way. Unlike most fish, she doesn't cast countless eggs into the water. She gives birth to a few fully formed young. Newborn great whites are completely independent. In a sense, however, the mother looks after them *before* they are born. She does this by only giving birth in the shallows—where her young are less likely to become another shark's meal.

CAGE DIVE WITH THE SHARKS

Are you ready for a breath-taking experience? Now you can cage dive with great white sharks. Feel the rush of swimming next to these incredibly intelligent and potentially dangerous animals in the complete safety of a steel cage. There are many adventure travel companies that now offer this exciting sea excursion. The best diving areas are near the Farallon Islands, off the coast of San Francisco, in the area of Isla de Guadalupe, off the coast of Baja California.



COMPREHENSION

Write **T** or **F** to show whether each statement is *true* or *false*. Write **NI** if there is *no information* in the reading to help you make a judgment.

1. _____ Human beings rarely survive attack by a great white shark.
2. _____ A great white shark weighs a little more than two African elephants.
3. _____ The female great white produces offspring in the same way that all fish do.
4. _____ Because great whites are always hungry, they can never stop swimming.
5. _____ You wouldn't be likely to find a great white shark near the South Pole.
6. _____ Unlike fish, seals and dolphins are warmblooded animals.

SUFFIXES

Rewrite the **boldface** word to complete each sentence. Add a suffix from the box to make the correct word form. Hint: You will *not* use all the suffixes in the box.

-ies	-ated	-er	-ity	-est	-ious	-al	-less
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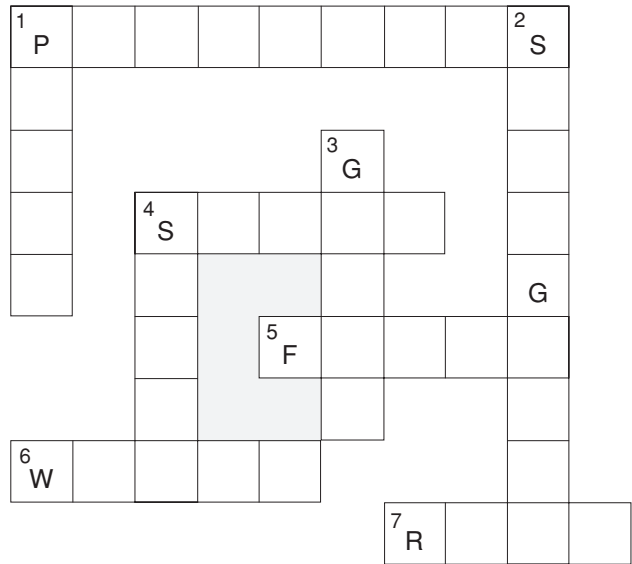
1. The great white is the **(large)** _____ of all predatory sharks.
2. The shark can pick up **(electric)** _____ nerve signals in its prey.
3. Constant swimming forces **(oxygen)** _____ water through the shark's gills.
4. The shark's **(mystery)** _____ antibodies make it immune to disease.
5. Most fish cast **(count)** _____ eggs into the water.

PUZZLER

Use the clues to help you solve the crossword puzzle. Answers are words that complete the sentences.

ACROSS

- The great white is one of the world's most efficient _____.
- Its diet includes seals, dolphins, and _____.
- The great white seems to dislike human _____.
- It prefers temperate _____.
- Shark attacks on people are _____.



DOWN

- A shark sometimes _____ its head out of the water.
- Oxygenated water is taken in through the shark's _____.
- The shark's bloodthirsty image has been used to justify its _____.
- Pores in the shark's _____ act as sensors.

ALPHABETICAL ORDER

List the words from the reading in alphabetical order.

pace	accuracy	shallows	efficient	astounding
scents	sensor	invader	immune	sockets

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____