

Name: _____ date: _____

Reading for Information

Reading Part 3: Read the following passage.

A. The narwhal is an endangered type of whale found in the frigid waters of the Arctic, extending from Canada through the Norwegian waters to Russia. Narwhal means "corpse whale", and it has earned its name because of its mottled dark grey colour. Narwhals are regularly harvested for meat and ivory in northern Canada and Greenland. Narwhals share physical characteristics with Beluga whales, having similar shape and size. Both species lack dorsal fins, have short beaks, rounded heads and a thick layer of blubber to adapt to glacial conditions.

B. The narwhals' distinctive characteristic lies in the presence of a long 2.5 meter spiraling tusk that protrudes from the males' foreheads, resembling a unicorn. The horn-like formation, however, is a long left tooth. The right tooth remains embedded in the skull and measures roughly 30 centimeters. Female tusks have a more regularly defined morphology. They are much shorter, straighter, and do not collect as much algae on the surface, thus appearing whiter.

C. For hundreds of years the purpose of the tusk on the "unicorn whale" has puzzled scientists and local aboriginal elders alike. A northern aboriginal legend explains the narwhal's tusk was created when a woman shooting with a harpoon rope was dragged into the ocean after the harpoon had struck a large narwhal whale. She then was transformed into a narwhal herself, and her hair, which was long and twisted, became the characteristic of the spiral tusk. In academic circles, the tusk remains an evolutionary mystery that defies many of the known principles of mammalian teeth. Preliminary studies suggest the tusk enables whales to determine salinity levels and allows them to detect food in their environment.

D. Narwhal behaviour also intrigues researchers. Males frequently engage in episodes of rubbing their tusks together, or "tusking," for as-yet unknown reasons. The same behaviour is not observed in the female counterparts or between females and males. Some studies theorize about the possibility of these being mating behaviours aimed at displaying genetic superiority. Support for such a theory, however, has proved scarce since unlike other mammalian species the behaviour is not aggressive. Narwhals are a migratory species. In an attempt to learn about their migration patterns and social behavior, their populations are being observed and recorded through satellite tracking conducted by scientists in Canada and Greenland.

E. Not given in any of the above paragraphs.

Decide which paragraph, A to D, has the information given in each statement below. Select E if the information is not given in any of the paragraphs.

1. There are physical differences between Narwhal males and females. _____
2. Narwhals are also referred to as death-like. _____
3. There are aspects of narwhal's anatomy that remain unexplained. _____
4. Narwhals present puzzling social interactions. _____
5. Narwhal whales are connected to Canadian aboriginal folklore. _____
6. There is a sound understanding of narwhals' mating behaviour. _____
7. Different countries are documenting narwhal behaviour patterns. _____
8. The narwhal population is in jeopardy. _____
9. Narwhals' physical characteristics are also observed in other whale groups. _____