STAAR TEST

Spongers of the Sea

1 Just about everyone knows that dolphins are social, friendly creatures. But in addition to being friendly, dolphins are also smart. Recently, researchers spotted dolphins in Shark Bay, Australia, doing something quite clever and unusual. The dolphins were using a tool to hunt for food.

2 Why would dolphins need a tool? And without hands, how would they use the tool? The answers show just how smart these animals are.

3 Dolphins need healthy food. However, the most nutritious fish often hide under the sand on the ocean floor. Typically, dolphins can locate these fish easily because a part of the fish's body creates an echo that dolphins can hear. But in Shark Bay, the bottom-dwelling fish do not have that body part. That means the fish are hard to find. Dolphins often cut themselves while using their noses to search for these fish that hide under the sand.

4 Amazingly, dolphins have found a way to solve this problem using a tool. The tool is a type of sponge that is found in the ocean. Many sponges are flat, but some are shaped like cones. The bottlenose dolphins in Shark Bay look for the cone-shaped sponges. When they find one, they use their nose, or rostrum, to break it off.

5 After the sponge is detached from the seafloor, a dolphin is able to fit it over its rostrum. Researchers believe that these dolphins wear the sponges in order to protect their rostrums from injury. The jagged rocks and broken coral will not cut them as they hunt for food along the ocean floor. Researchers call this hunting technique "sponging."

LIVEWORKSHEETS



A Sponging Dolphin

6 Once a fish is scared out of hiding, it will dart around in the open water before reburying itself in the ocean sand. This behavior gives the dolphin time to shake off the sponge and catch the fish.

7 Scientists notice interesting behavior patterns among sponging dolphins. Mother dolphins are teaching their calves how to use sponges. Scientists also see that sponging dolphins tend to socialize with other sponging dolphins. They will continue to study dolphins in hopes of learning more about how dolphins think and behave.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Use "Spongers of the Sea" (pp. 11–12) to answer questions 11–14. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

11 How do the bottom-dwelling fish in Shark Bay cause a problem for the dolphins?

A The fish swim so quickly the dolphins are unable to catch them.

B The fish are not nutritious enough to support the health of the dolphins.

C The fish travel to other locations during certain times of the year.

D The fish do not have a certain body part that allows the dolphins to locate them.

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12 The author wrote the selection most likely to —

F encourage the reader to visit Australia

G describe how dolphins use sponges as tools

H explain to the reader where dolphins find food

J identify which ocean animals live in Shark Bay

13 According to the selection, how do fish protect themselves from dolphins?

A They bury themselves beneath the sand along the sea floor.

B They take cover under sharp rocks and pieces of coral.

C They swim in a darting pattern in the open water.

D They make a ringing noise that tricks dolphins.

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14 Which idea from the selection is illustrated by the photograph?

F Bottom-dwelling fish in Shark Bay may be hard for dolphins to find.

G Researchers think dolphins are more intelligent than many other animals.

H Dolphins use their rostrums to help them locate food in the ocean.

J Shark Bay dolphins fit sponges over their rostrums before searching for fish.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Conflicts among the characters.

Directions: Read the description of the story. Determine the protagonist (central character) and antagonist (opposing force). Then describe the type of conflict (example: person vs. nature).

4. Brian has the best dog in the world. In fact, he has one of the only dogs in the world. That's because dogs are not allowed in Brian's world, where people believe that dogs spread diseases. Brian's dog will be executed if he is caught. Soon Brian learns of a mysterious underground dog owners club and joins the fight to legalize dogs. Can Brian and his new friends prove to the world that dogs are safe and friendly?

Protagonist:

Antagonist:

Type of conflict:

5. Janie is on a whitewater-rafting trip along a choppy river when their guide suddenly has a heart attack. Now she and the other passengers must learn to work together to survive the treacherous rapids. As if things weren't bad enough, some of the passengers have spotted a bear following the confused rafters along the shore. Will Janie make it home safely?

Protagonist:

Antagonist:

Type of conflict:

LIVEWORKSHEETS

6. Kirstin was once teased for being heavy, but then she lost a lot of weight. Now Kirstin is very skinny, but there is just one problem: she still sees an overweight girl when she looks in the mirror. Her friends and family try to convince her of how beautiful she is, but she doesn't believe them. Worse still, she is continuing to diet. Will Kirstin be able to align her body image with reality or will she destroy herself?

Protagonist:

Antagonist:

Type of conflict:

7. Greg is just a regular boy who tries his best in school and just so happens to have a magical unicorn. When he's not studying and playing baseball, Greg is riding his unicorn through the enchanted land of Harmonia. When Greg brings something to Harmonia that he shouldn't, a secret gate is unlocked and the muck-muck monsters are unleashed, causing terrible pollution in Harmonia. Can Greg and his unicorn stop the muck-muck monsters before they find a way to Greg's world?

Protagonist:

Antagonist:

Type of conflict:

LIVEWORKSHEETS

9. Jack Juniper is the best fighter pilot in the Air Force. He can take down an enemy jet while doing a barrel roll. One day while Jack is escorting some friendly pilots to a military base, something that Jack has never seen before attacks the convoy... aliens! Can Jack outmaneuver the highly skilled alien pilots or is the mission doomed to failure?

Protagonist:

Antagonist:

Type of conflict:

Exercise 1 - Comparatives and superlatives

Complete the sentences with the present simple form of the verbs in brackets. Use contractions where possible.

1. My sister thinks she's _____ (intelligent) than me, but I don't agree!
2. *Avatar* is probably _____ (bad) film I've seen!
3. What is _____ (wet) month of the year in England?
4. Do you think the *Harry Potter* films are _____ (good) than the books?
5. Who is _____ (powerful) person in your country?
6. I think *Men in Black 1* was _____ (funny) than *Men in Black 3*.
7. Is Angelina Jolie _____ (old) than Sandra Bullock?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

8. John is _____ (nice) person that I know.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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