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Lesson 12

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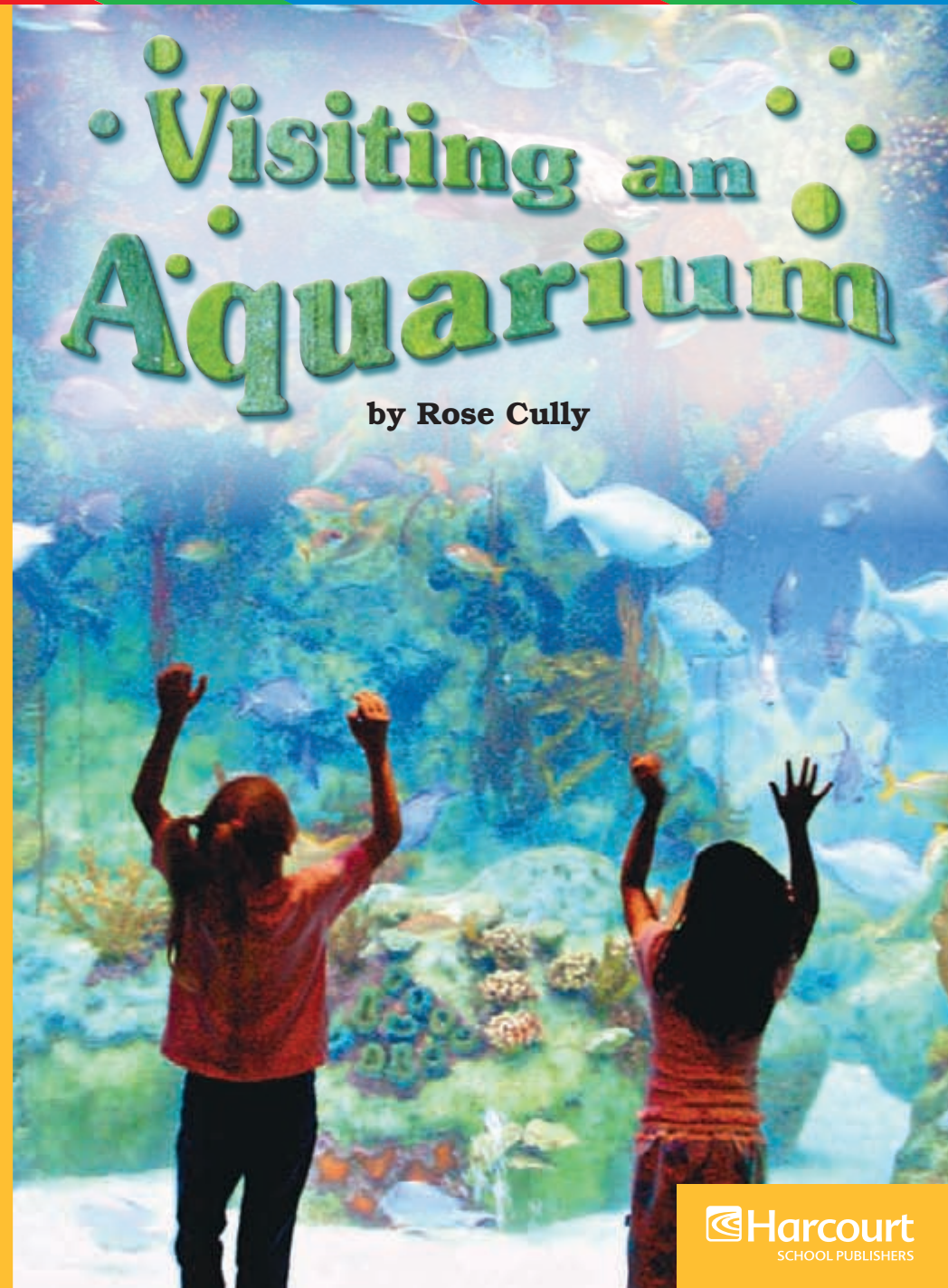
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# Visiting an Aquarium

by Rose Cully



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Do you visit or live in a big city near the water? That big city might have an aquarium. An aquarium is a place that people visit to learn about animals and plants that live in the water. An aquarium is also a place to have fun!

There are many different exhibits in an aquarium. Most exhibits include information about the names of the animals and the places where they live. An exhibit may have just one animal or it may have a group of plants and animals. Some aquariums have exhibits that make it seem like you are looking into a real ocean. Some even have tide pools where you can touch the animals.



Visitors to an aquarium can also learn about things other than plants and animals. Some aquariums may have exhibits on how the tides in the ocean work. Some exhibits may make you feel like you are under a wave as it breaks over your head. Many aquariums have movies that tell how you can help protect the oceans and the plants and the animals that live in the oceans. Protecting our oceans and plants is the most important thing that aquariums do.

Now let's look at some of the amazing animals you might find living in an aquarium.





## Harbor Seals

Harbor seals can grow to be four to six feet (1.2–1.8 m) long. They can be brown, gray, or black. Harbor seals' backs are darker than their bellies. All harbor seals have spots or rings. Harbor seal babies are called pups. Pups are born on land or in the water. Harbor seals live near coasts in the northern half of the earth.

Harbor seals can be taught to do tricks, such as waving “hello” with their flippers! Some aquariums have harbor seal shows. The tricks are fun, but the shows also teach people about seals. Also, scientists called *marine biologists* study seals and other animals in aquariums to learn more about how the animals behave.





## **Bottlenose Dolphins**

Bottlenose dolphins can stay underwater for about ten minutes. Dolphins breathe through a blowhole on their head. Bottlenose dolphins can dive to around 150 feet (46 m) deep. Bottlenose dolphins will swim long distances to different waters to find warmer water and more food if necessary.





## **California Sea Otters**

The California, or southern, sea otter was once thought to be extinct. When an animal is extinct, it means that there are no more left anywhere on earth.

Aquariums have played an important role in making sure the California sea otter survives. Today, there are about 2,000 of this type of otter. That may sound like a lot, but it really isn't. These otters are still listed as endangered, or in danger of becoming extinct, because there are so few left. There are laws to protect those otters

that are left. The ultimate goal is that someday there will be so many otters that they will not be in danger of becoming extinct.

Baby California sea otters sleep and eat on their mother's furry bellies. The New York Aquarium has a California sea otter. The sea otter lost its mother in the wild. A kind woman found the otter alone and cared for it. The woman even slept with the otter on a special raft in the water to give it the care it needed.



## Black-footed Penguin

The black-footed penguin lives in southern Africa. The body of the black-footed penguin is shaped like a bowling pin. The black-footed penguin's feet are webbed like a duck's feet. Black-footed penguins are fast swimmers. Black-footed penguins use their wings to move themselves through the water.

When penguin babies hatch from their eggs they are already covered with thick feathers. The feathers keep the babies warm in the cold. The sound that a black-footed penguin makes is similar to the sound a donkey makes.





## Sharks

There are over 350 kinds of sharks in the world. Sharks have been around for over 400 million years! All sharks swim by moving their tails from side to side. Each type of shark has a different shaped tooth. Sharks never run out of teeth. If a shark loses a tooth, another tooth moves forward from the rows and rows of teeth behind.

## Beluga Whale

The white, or beluga, whale is born a grayish color. A beluga becomes white when it gets older. Beluga whales are social animals. They live in groups or pods of two to twenty-five. Beluga whales can make faces to show expression.

Whales make a lot of noises while they're underwater. A beluga whale makes sounds from a part of its forehead called the melon. The sound travels from the melon through the open water until it hits something. Then the sound bounces back to the whale. The whale feels the sound in its mouth. In this great way, the whale can tell how far away objects are. Whales can also tell how big objects are and in what direction they are moving.











## Sea Turtles

Sea turtles come in many different sizes, shapes, and colors. The weight of sea turtles can range from 100 to 1,300 pounds (45–590 kg). Sea turtles can live to be around eighty years old. Sea turtles have been living in our oceans for about 150 million years.

Each year, the female sea turtles leave the water to go to the beach to lay their eggs in the sand. The turtles return to the water after laying their eggs. When the eggs hatch, the baby sea turtles crawl across the sand to the sea. Sea turtles are endangered and could one day become extinct.



There is so much to learn when you visit an aquarium! There are amazing aquatic animals to discover. Many other interesting exhibits teach you about the ocean. Our oceans and many of the animals that live in them need our help and protection. The more you can learn about the ocean, the more you will know how you can do *your* part to help!



## Scaffolded Language Development

**USING -LOGY** On the board, write the word *biology*. Explain to students that the root *bio* means “life.” Point to the ending of the word, explaining that *-logy* means “the study of.” Then review the roots in the word box with students. Have them add *-logy* to each root to make a word that names a science and say the word chorally.

<i>anthropo</i> = human being	<i>psycho</i> = mind
<i>astro</i> = star	<i>zoo</i> = animal
<i>geo</i> = the earth	

For each new word, have students write a sentence with the following pattern: *Anthropology is the study of human beings.*



### Social Studies

**Oceans Chart** Have students list the names of the major oceans of the world: Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Southern, and Arctic. Then have them locate each ocean on a globe and list the names of some of the countries that border the ocean.



### School-Home Connection

**Animal Stories** Have students talk to family members about animals that live in the ocean. Then have students write a story about their family’s experiences or make up a story about a family visit to an aquarium.