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Whaling protester in near-miss harpooning

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THE ARTICLE

Whaling protester in near-miss harpooning

A harpoon fired by a Japanese whaling vessel sailed a whisker above a Greenpeace inflatable dinghy yesterday and tossed an activist into icy Antarctic seas. Texas Joe Constantine ended up in the drink when the harpoon's rope entangled itself in his boat and jeopardized the lives of his crew. The harpoon itself whistled a meter above the activists' heads and killed the minke whale the whalers were shadowing. Constantine said the whalers were becoming more desperate because of the success of the anti-whalers in disrupting the whale hunt. He said his team's continuing successes had escalated tensions and that the Japanese whalers were becoming increasingly acrimonious at the cat and mouse tactics employed by Greenpeace.

The near miss has resulted in Greenpeace rethinking its human shield-style protest against Japanese scientific whaling. Greenpeace spokesman Shane Rattenbury said the hunting was not scientific but "commercial whaling in disguise". He believes the whalers' frustrations are leading them to take greater risks in the ongoing confrontations with the protesters. He said: "Yesterday took it to a new level – we are very concerned about that. There is definitely an increasing level of tensions down here and the harpooners are certainly starting to take shots that perhaps a week or two weeks ago they would not have taken." The whalers say Greenpeace is taking unprecedented risks purely for the sake of public relations and media attention.

WARM-UPS

1. I'M A WHALE: You are a whale. Talk to the other “whales” in the class about ocean life. What do you do all day? Do you have any shark friends? What are your plans for the weekend? Have you heard about the humans killing whales for scientific research?

2. GREENPEACE: What protests by Greenpeace do you support most? In pairs / groups, rank the following in order of importance to you. Talk about how strongly you feel about each issue.

- Banning whaling
- Stopping climate change
- Protecting ancient forests
- Banning genetic engineering
- Ending nuclear weapons
- Encouraging sustainable trade
- Eliminating toxic chemicals
- Protecting Earth's oceans

3. WHAT DO YOU KNOW? With paper and pen, walk around the class ask other students, “What do you know about whales?” Return to your partner / group and share your findings. Walk around the class again, this time telling classmates about whales: “Did you know (that)...?” Repeat for “What do you know about Greenpeace?”

4. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Harpoons / whaling / dinghies / icy seas / Antarctica / whistles / shadows / hunting / tensions / cats and mice / disguises / risks / new levels / media / public relations

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

5. TWO-MINUTE WHALE DEBATES: Face each other in pairs and engage in the following fun 2-minute debates. Students A strongly believe in the first argument, students B the second. Change pairs often.

- a. Whales are best. vs. Sharks are best.
- b. Whale meat is delicious. vs. It's unethical to eat whale meat.
- c. I want to go whale watching. vs. How boring.
- d. Whaling should be banned. vs. Whaling for scientific research is OK.
- e. Whales should not be eaten. They are intelligent. vs. So are cows and pigs.
- f. Whale meat is a part of many cultural diets. vs. Those cultures must change.
- g. Whaling is cruel. vs. So are boxing and blood sports.
- h. Whaling is the same as fishing. vs. Whales are not fish.
- i. Whales talk to each other. vs. Birds talk to each other too.
- j. Japan should be punished for whaling. vs. No. Whaling is part of Japan's culture.

6. WHALE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “whale”. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A whaling protester fired a harpoon at another whaling vessel. | T / F |
| b. An anti-whaling activist took to drink because of stress. | T / F |
| c. Minke whales whistled at Greenpeace boats in Antarctica. | T / F |
| d. Greenpeace is playing a cat and mouse game with Japanese whalers. | T / F |
| e. Greenpeace is rethinking its human shield-style of protests. | T / F |
| f. Greenpeace said the hunting is commercial whaling in disguise. | T / F |
| g. Greenpeace said the whalers are taking things to a new level. | T / F |
| h. The whalers said Greenpeace is not taking any serious risks. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| a. vessel | endangered |
| b. tossed | exasperation |
| c. the drink | unheard of |
| d. jeopardized | demonstration |
| e. acrimonious | slung |
| f. protest | rancorous |
| g. ongoing | skirmishes |
| h. frustrations | craft |
| i. confrontations | continuing |
| j. unprecedented | the water |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. sailed a whisker | entangled itself in his boat |
| b. ended up in | had escalated tensions |
| c. the harpoon's rope | tactics employed by Greenpeace |
| d. continuing successes | ongoing confrontations |
| e. the cat and mouse | disguise |
| f. its human | risks |
| g. commercial whaling in | above a Greenpeace inflatable dinghy |
| h. take greater risks in the | to a new level |
| i. Yesterday took it | the drink |
| j. unprecedented | shield-style protest |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

ODD WORD OUT: Delete the incorrect or least likely word from the groups in *italics*.

Whaling protester in near-miss harpooning

A harpoon fired by a Japanese whaling *vessel / craft / vestige* sailed a whisker above a Greenpeace inflatable dinghy yesterday and *tossed / dumped / tousled* an activist into icy Antarctic seas. Texas Joe Constantine ended up in the drink when the harpoon's rope entangled itself in his boat and *endangered / engendered / jeopardized* the lives of his crew. The harpoon itself *wolfed down / whistled / shot* a meter above the activists' heads and killed the minke whale the whalers were *shading / tracking / shadowing*. Constantine said the whalers were becoming more *anguished / desperate / disparate* because of the success of the anti-whalers in disrupting the whale hunt. He said his team's continuing successes had *escalated / elevated / escaped* tensions and that the Japanese whalers were becoming increasingly *rancorous / acrimonious / melodious* at the cat and mouse tactics employed by Greenpeace.

The near miss has resulted in Greenpeace *reevaluating / rethinking / reminding* its human shield-style *prodigy / demonstration / protest* against Japanese scientific whaling. Greenpeace spokesman Shane Rattenbury said the hunting was not scientific but "*commercial / plug / profit-oriented* whaling in disguise". He believes the whalers' frustrations are leading them to take greater risks in the *ongoing / continuing / outgoing* confrontations with the protesters. He said: "Yesterday took it to a new level – we are very *concerned / concerted / perturbed* about that. There is definitely an increasing level of tensions down here and the *harpooners / whalers / harpists* are certainly starting to take shots that perhaps a week or two weeks ago they would not have taken." The whalers say Greenpeace is taking *unheard of / unpretentious / unprecedented* risks purely for the *sake / purpose / fermenting* of public relations and media attention.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Whaling protester in near-miss harpooning

A harpoon fired by a Japanese whaling vessel sailed a _____ above a Greenpeace inflatable dinghy yesterday and _____ an activist into icy Antarctic seas. Texas Joe Constantine ended up in the drink when the harpoon's rope entangled itself in his boat and _____ the lives of his crew. The harpoon itself whistled a meter above the activists' heads and killed the minke whale the whalers were _____. Constantine said the whalers were becoming more desperate because of the success of the anti-whalers in _____ the whale hunt. He said his team's continuing successes had escalated tensions and that the Japanese whalers were becoming increasingly _____ at the cat and mouse tactics employed by Greenpeace.

The near miss has resulted in Greenpeace rethinking its human _____-style protest against Japanese _____ whaling. Greenpeace spokesman Shane Rattenbury said the hunting was not scientific but "commercial whaling in disguise". He believes the whalers' _____ are leading them to take greater risks in the _____ confrontations with the protesters. He said: "Yesterday took it to a new level – we are very concerned about that. There is definitely an increasing level of tensions down here and the _____ are certainly starting to take shots that perhaps a week or two weeks ago they would not have taken." The whalers say Greenpeace is taking _____ risks _____ for the sake of public relations and media attention.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'whisker'** and **'whistle'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. ODD WORD OUT: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "WHALING" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about whaling.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| • whisker | • miss |
| • icy | • disguise |
| • whistled | • ongoing |
| • desperate | • level |
| • tensions | • shots |
| • mouse | • unprecedented |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What adjectives describe your feelings about the article?
- c. What do you know about whaling?
- d. Do you think it's OK to kill whales for scientific research?
- e. What do you think of Greenpeace's actions?
- f. What would you be thinking right now if you were Mr. Constantine?
- g. Do you think what Greenpeace is doing is illegal?
- h. Would you like to try whale meat?
- i. Is eating whale meat OK if it is part of a centuries-old cultural tradition?
- j. Have you ever played any cat and mouse games?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think whales are too intelligent to eat?
- d. If a whaler's harpoon killed a protester, would the whalers be guilty of murder?
- e. Why do so many countries in the world oppose whaling?
- f. Have you ever taken part in a protest?
- g. Would you ever become part of a human shield to protest against something?
- h. What scientific research do you think is necessary that requires killing thousands of whales each year?
- i. Should we stop hunting and killing all animals?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ROLE PLAY: Should all forms of whaling be banned?

Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role to develop your roles and discuss ideas and "strategies" before the role play begins. Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – Japanese whaler

You live in a very remote coastal village. Your community has whaled for centuries. Without whaling the whole community would die an economic death. You hate Greenpeace. They don't understand the oceans and don't respect your culture.

Role B – Texas Joe Constantine

As a Greenpeace activist, you believe whaling is ethically and morally wrong. They are endangered and very intelligent mammals. There is no scientific reason to kill whales. You think whaling is barbaric. You want to sue the whalers for jeopardizing your life.

Role C – Whale Steak Inc. President

Your company processes whale meat. You believe whales are a sustainable source of food. You believe that when deforestation makes it uneconomical to raise cows on land, whales will become an important source of food. You think Japan's scientific research is essential to ensure the survival of whales. You think Greenpeace is uninformed.

Role D – Jo the whale

You are a whale with a family. You're simply trying to get by in the ocean and trying to avoid the killer humans with their deadly harpoons. You hate the sounds of pain other whales make for many hours as they die their slow deaths after being harpooned. You think humans should stick to beef.

After the role play, discuss whether you really believed what you were saying in your role.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Japanese whaling. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. WHALE POSTER: Make a poster about one species of whale. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. A DAY IN THE LIFE: You are a whale. Write an account of one day in your life. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone have similar days?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. F d. T e. T f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| a. vessel | craft |
| b. tossed | slung |
| c. the drink | the water |
| d. jeopardized | endangered |
| e. acrimonious | rancorous |
| f. protest | demonstration |
| g. ongoing | continuing |
| h. frustrations | exasperation |
| i. confrontations | skirmishes |
| j. unprecedented | unheard of |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. sailed a whisker | above a Greenpeace inflatable dinghy |
| b. ended up in | the drink |
| c. the harpoon's rope | entangled itself in his boat |
| d. continuing successes | had escalated tensions |
| e. the cat and mouse | tactics employed by Greenpeace |
| f. its human | shield-style protest |
| g. commercial whaling in | disguise |
| h. take greater risks in the | ongoing confrontations |
| i. Yesterday took it | to a new level |
| j. unprecedented | risks |

ODD WORD OUT:

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