

People travel great distances to watch whales in their natural environment. Lucy Carter is one of them. She went whale watching off the coast of Canada in 1999, and her first trip made a deep impression on her.

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Editor

ON THE WHALE TRAIL



I wasn't really sure what to expect. We had to put on waterproof suits before the boat left the dock – I felt rather like an intrepid explorer journeying into unfamiliar territory. Even the boat trip out to where the whales were last spotted was memorable – I can remember being dazzled by the sunlight on the water's surface.

As we approached the area where the group of whales had last been sighted, the captain slowed the boat down and we looked right across the surface of the Pacific hoping to catch a glimpse of one of the creatures.

At first we seemed to be the only living things around apart from a few gulls screeching above us. Then suddenly, without a sound, something cut through the still surface of the water a short distance away. It travelled a few metres and then, silently, disappeared. I didn't speak – just craned my neck and scanned the ocean for another sighting.

There was nothing to see for a few minutes, I even began to wonder if I had imagined it. Then, with no warning, the boat was rocked as 30 tonnes of grey whale launched itself out of the water and flew through the air. I was speechless – it was so much more spectacular than I had expected – bigger, louder, closer. I hadn't really had time to take in what we'd just seen when several whales appeared simultaneously, two leaping clean out of the water, others just breaking the surface. I was drenched by the spray as they crashed back into the depths of the ocean.



We watched them for an hour. I felt like an intruder in what was so clearly the whales' territory – perhaps because they seemed so unaware of our presence. Even when the ocean was still and the captain assured us they had moved further out to sea, I was reluctant to return to the shore, hoping for one last chance to see these truly amazing creatures.

But as we approached land, I was increasingly glad that we hadn't shared all their secrets. It was satisfying to know that some parts of the whales' life below the ocean waves remained truly their own, untouched by human curiosity.



1. What did Lucy have to do before the boat left the dock?

Circle the correct option.

Four yellow rounded rectangular buttons with black text are arranged horizontally. From left to right, they contain the following text: "sit down", "put on a waterproof suit", "take a photograph", and "look out for whales".

1 mark

2. Lucy's account of whale watching is made up of five main events.

Number each stage of the trip to show the order in which they happen.

The first one has been done for you.

goes back to the dock	<input type="checkbox"/>
sees one whale swimming	<input type="checkbox"/>
sets off on the journey	<input type="checkbox"/>
sees several whales leaping	<input type="checkbox"/>
prepares for the journey	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>

2 marks

3. In the first paragraph, Lucy feels as if she is going somewhere completely new.

Find and **copy** a word or phrase which tells you this.

1 mark

4. The author describes the whale and makes the event seem dramatic.

Explain how each of these phrases helps to make the description effective.

(a) *There was nothing to see for a few minutes*

—

1 mark

(b) *I was speechless*

—

—

1 mark

5. *launched and crashed*

Explain the impression these words give you of the whale's movements.

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2 marks

6. Towards the end of the trip, Lucy admits that she has a mixture of feelings about her experience.

Explain her different feelings.

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3 marks

