

# Big Blue Whale, by Nicola Davies

## Non-fiction unit

Year 3/4

HIAS English Team  
Spring 2020  
Final version

© Hampshire County Council



# Using the Home Learning Materials

## The materials

- Each writing booklet contains a sequence of 5 lessons.
- You should set aside time to complete each of the lessons in order.
- Each lesson will take no more than 30 mins to complete.

## How to use

- Read the instructions carefully before you start a task.
- Each lesson has a simple explanation and examples to get you started.

## How can parents, carers and siblings help?

- Read the extracts aloud with your child
- Collect interesting words and phrases on paper / post-its as they read
- Talk to your children about their ideas before they write
- Adapt any of the resources and materials as you feel necessary to support your child's needs

## 5 day writing sequence

This sequence is developed using 'The Big Blue Whale,' by Nicola Davies and also features a visit to San Diego Zoo!

Listen to the book here: <https://vimeo.com/60259773>

The outcome of this unit is to write a non-fiction information page.

### Teaching sequence:

- 1) Visit the zoo!
- 2) Retrieve information from a non-fiction text
- 3) Grammar practise and play - similes
- 4) Revisit the zoo!
- 5) Writing challenge

## Lesson 1 – Visit the zoo!

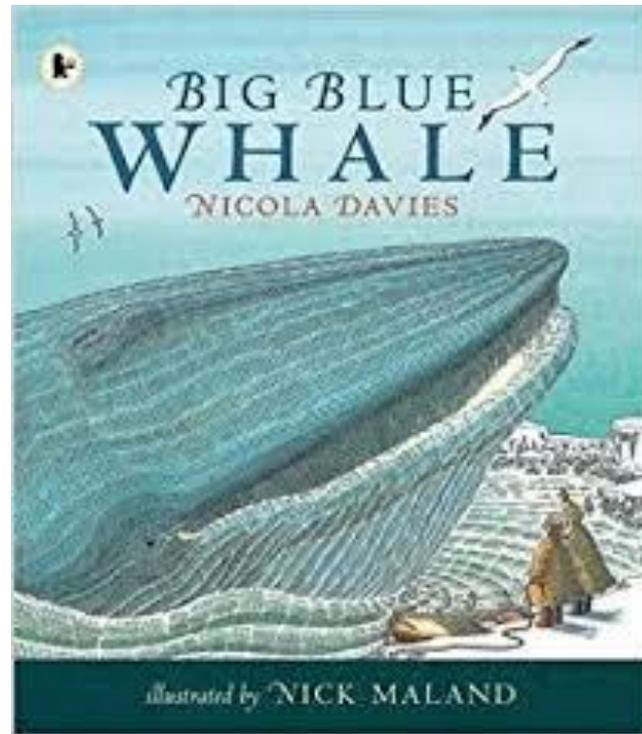
Visit the webcams at San Diego Zoo! <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos>

Spend some time enjoying the animals and their habitats – remember that patience is required to spot animals at a zoo!

Discuss what can be seen and how to describe this for visitors.



# The Big Blue Whale



## Lesson 2 – Retrieving information

Listen to and enjoy part or all of the Big Blue Whale, by Nicola Davies. While you are listening, jot down as many facts as you can about blue whales that you learn from the text. Try and organise these into sections as per the below table (available on page 11)

<https://vimeo.com/60259773>

<p>What does the blue whale look and smell like?</p>	<p>How does the blue whale swim and move?</p>
<p>What and how does the blue whale eat?</p>	<p>How does the blue whale breathe?</p>
<p>Other facts:</p>	

Discuss how non-fiction texts allow us to find out facts that are organised into clear sections.

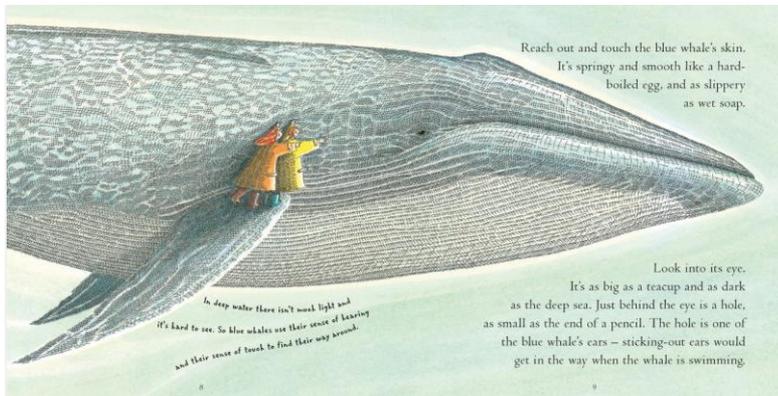
## Lesson 3 – Grammar Practise and Play - Similes

Read the sentences below from the Big Blue Whale:

*Reach out and touch the blue whales skin. It's springy and smooth like a hard-boiled egg, and as slippery as wet soap.*

*Look into its eye. It's as big as a teacup and as dark as the deep sea.*

*When it breathes out, it makes a great misty puff, as high as a house.*



Discuss how the author uses similes to help the reader learn facts about the blue whale in this non-fiction text.

How do they help us to make comparisons?

# Lesson 3 – Grammar practise and play - similes

Look the pictures of the animals below. Write a sentence to go with each picture using similes in the way Nicola Davies has in the Big Blue Whale.



## Lesson 4 – A day out at the zoo!

Revisit the webcams, which show animals at San Diego Zoo.

<https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos> (warning: just like any zoo, spotting the animals can prove tough!)

Make notes about them focusing on areas such as:

- Habitat
- Appearance
- The way they move
- Visitor appeal

Have fun and don't fall into the cages!

## Lesson 5 – Writing Challenges

Having visited the zoo and learnt about non-fiction texts try one of the following:

- 1) Write a non-fiction page based on one of the animals you (hopefully) saw at the zoo. Think about appearance, habitat, how they move and fun features. You may wish to do some further research about the animals to help you. Draw pictures and label them.
- 2) Create a visitors guide for San Diego Zoo, describing the animals that people will see if they visit the zoo. Make it look attractive and create plenty of fun facts, including similes!

<p>What does the blue whale look and smell like?</p>	<p>How does the blue whale swim and move?</p>
<p>What and how does the blue whale eat?</p>	<p>How does the blue whale breathe?</p>
<p>Other facts:</p>	

## HIAS English team

The HIAS English team offer a wide range of high-quality services to support schools in improving outcomes for learners, including courses, bespoke consultancy and in-house training.

**During the current school closures, we are still offering school support in a variety of ways such as video conferencing, phone calls and bespoke creation of resources remotely. Coming soon will be teacher training via virtual classrooms. We would be happy to discuss your needs.**

For further details referring to English, please contact:  
Emma Tarrant : [emma.tarrant@hants.gov.uk](mailto:emma.tarrant@hants.gov.uk)

For further details on the full range of services available please contact us using the following details:

Tel: 01962 874820 or email: [hias.enquiries@hants.gov.uk](mailto:hias.enquiries@hants.gov.uk)

