

Directions: Read the information below about great white sharks and blue whales. Then for each statement, write to which it applies: Shark, Whale, Both, Neither.

The **great white shark** is larger, faster, and more dangerous than most. It can reach a length of 20 feet and weigh 70,000 pounds. Though its preferred diet is seals and dolphins, this fearsome fish regularly attacks almost any type of warm-blooded animal. In its snout are small holes that lead to receptors. These receptors pick up electrical nerve signals in the prey. The shark also has other sensors that detect blood in the water. Very rare in tropical or polar regions, great whites patrol mainly temperate ocean coastlines.

The body is designed for efficiency in the water. It is broad in the middle and tapered at the ends for streamlined movement. Winglike pectoral fins provide lift and stability. An oil stored in the liver adds buoyancy. The tail fins are vertical and act as a rudder for fast turns. Amazingly it never stops swimming.

All sharks are fish and most are carnivores. The great white is the world's largest predatory shark. The whale shark is nearly twice as big, but like a baleen whale, eats mainly plankton.

The **blue whale** is the largest known mammal to ever live. Its size ranges from 70 to 100 feet in length and up to 125 tons in weight (250,000 pounds). Despite its enormity, the blue whale lives on krill, a tiny crustacean, and other planktonic organisms. An adult ingests 3-4 tons of krill per day. This is done by scooping up large quantities of water containing krill with its huge mouth. In its mouth are not teeth, but rather a series of sheets, similar in consistency to our fingernails, that serve as a filtering system. These sheets, or baleen, grow from the roof of the mouth, ranging from smooth to brushlike. The blue whale lives in the open ocean but tends to migrate to the polar waters in spring and back to subtropical waters in fall.

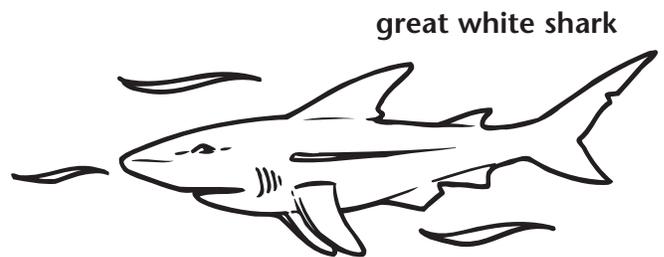
In water, the weight of the body is not as much a factor as the shape. Like sharks, whales have torpedo-shaped bodies and pectoral fins for balance. Their tail fins, however, are horizontal which is more suited for forward motion rather than making sharp turns.

Blue whales have been hunted relentlessly in the past for their blubber and oil. As a result they were nearly hunted to extinction and still remain on the endangered animal list.

- _____ 1. is a mammal
- _____ 2. has sharp teeth
- _____ 3. has a streamlined body
- _____ 4. is a fierce predator
- _____ 5. avoids polar and tropical waters
- _____ 6. is covered in scales



blue whale



great white shark

- _____ 7. is endangered
- _____ 8. is a fish
- _____ 9. has horizontal tail fins
- _____ 10. has fingernails
- _____ 11. is the largest of its kind
- _____ 12. lives mainly in coastal waters
- _____ 13. has vertical tail fins

Name: _____

Date: _____