

GMAT Reading Comprehension Sample Passage

The study of cetacean intelligence has added to our understanding of dolphin behaviour. Even though cetaceans, which are marine animals including dolphins, whales, and porpoises, are widely considered intelligent species, conclusions about the type and extent of dolphin intelligence have not yet been reached. However, there are several things that we do know about the ways in which dolphins communicate and behave in groups.

Researchers study the level of communication among dolphins because communication systems can offer insight into an animal's intelligence. Dolphins produce two primary types of vocalizations called clicks and whistles. Dolphins generally use clicks for the purposes of echolocation and whistles for communication. Dolphins emit clicks as rapid broadband bursts that are sent out into their environment and then echo back, giving them information about their surroundings. Whistles differ from clicks by being sent out as narrow-band frequency modulated signals, which are for communications such as contact calls. Strong evidence supports the idea that dolphins use signature whistles to identify and call each other.

One hypothesis called the "acoustic flashlight" hypothesis maintains that dolphins may be able to learn passively about their surroundings by listening in on the echolocation inspections of other dolphins. Scientists are researching this idea by looking at how dolphins participate in postural pointing, an activity that humans perform when they point a finger to direct another person towards an object or location.

Communication is also an important part of how dolphins behave in groups, which can range in size from a pair of dolphins to a pod of hundreds of individuals. Researchers have noticed that large packs rely on a highly organized method of communication when responding to predators, such as sharks. When a group of dolphins reacts to an unexpected disturbance, it will quickly move in near-unison to avoid the threat. In this way, dolphins rely on visual and auditory cues to communicate their location and to interpret the locations of others in the pod.

Questions-

1. It can be inferred from the passage that a dolphin would use clicks instead of whistles to:

- A call to another member of the same pod
- B locate a possible route through an underwater obstacle
- C communicate a perceived threat to other dolphins

D contact other dolphins when separated from a group

E Identify itself to another calling dolphin

2. It can be inferred from the passage that if another animal does not have a communication system as highly advanced as that of a dolphin, then:

A the other animal will be less likely to survive a shark attack

B the other animal is probably a whale or porpoise

C the other animal probably does not travel in a group with others of its kind

D the other animal does not engage in postural pointing

E the other animal is likely considered less intelligent than the dolphin

3. Which of the following is the function of the first paragraph?

A to contrast the communication styles of dolphins with those of other cetaceans

B to define an abstract idea in order to simplify the discussion that follows

C to introduce the passage's focus on how the dolphins communicate and behave in groups

D to explain the cause of an event that the following paragraphs discuss in detail

E to show the consequences of a mistake made in earlier research

4. The author of this passage is primarily concerned with:

A contrasting dolphin communications with those of other cetaceans

B defining the term "cetacean intelligence" by offering an example of dolphin communication

C offering an example of how dolphins used highly-developed communication patterns to escape predators

D explaining how dolphins communicate and behave in groups

E providing an in-depth analysis of a disputed claim

5. The passage suggests that postural pointing provides evidence of a dolphin's ability to:

- A mimic a similar human action
- B learn by listening to the clicks made by other dolphins
- C comprehend visual cues such as light and shadow
- D respond more intelligently to auditory cues than do other cetaceans
- E rapidly react to perceived threats