

Scientists 'talk' with a whale for 20 minutes

28th December 2023



Scientists say they have had a "conversation" with a whale. They also say the chat could help them to one day talk to aliens. The scientists are from the University of California, the Alaska Whale Foundation, and SETI (Search for Extra-

terrestrial Intelligence). The three organizations teamed up and spoke to a humpback whale named Twain. They spoke to her in "humpback language" for 20 minutes. Their conversation took place after the scientists sent a "contact call" into the ocean off the coast of Alaska. Twain heard the call and responded. She swam to the research boat and chatted. SETI said it was the first ever communication between humans and humpback whales.

The scientists say their conversation with Twain was not a deep one. Professor Brenda McCowan said it was more like a series of greetings. Whales use contact calls to let other whales know where they are. The scientists made the same call 36 times over a 20-minute period. Each time, Twain responded by calling back. She even matched the intervals between each call the researchers made. Professor McCowan told the Business Insider website that her research could make it easier to talk to aliens. She said: "There are diverse intelligences on this planet. By studying them, we can better understand what an alien intelligence might be like because they are not going to be exactly like ours."

Sources: boredpanda.com / earth.com / unilad.com

Writing

We must communicate with aliens in the future. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / conversation / aliens / intelligence / whale / language / ocean / research / greetings / contact / 20 minutes / intervals / diverse / planet / understand / exactly

True / False

- 1) The scientists in the article hope to chat to aliens one day. T / F
- 2) The scientists spoke to a blue whale. T / F
- 3) The scientists and the whale communicated in a giant pool. T / F
- 4) This is the second time scientists have chatted to a humpback whale. T / F
- 5) The conversation with the whale was in deep water. T / F
- 6) The whale responded to 36 calls the scientists made in the water. T / F
- 7) The whale matched the intervals of the scientists' calls. T / F
- 8) A scientist said our intelligence is the same as alien intelligence. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. conversation | a. sequence |
| 2. teamed up | b. happened |
| 3. named | c. extra-terrestrial |
| 4. took place | d. replied |
| 5. responded | e. collaborated |
| 6. series | f. precisely |
| 7. intervals | g. called |
| 8. diverse | h. gaps |
| 9. alien | i. varied |
| 10. exactly | j. chat |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) When was the last time you had a deep conversation?
- c) What are your favourite forms of greetings?
- d) What questions would aliens ask humans?
- e) What kinds of animals would you like to talk to?
- f) How can we increase our intelligence?
- g) Who is the most intelligent person you know?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

Phrase Match

- the chat could help them to one
- The three organizations
- Their conversation took
- off the coast
- it was the first
- their conversation with Twain was not a
- 36 times over
- Twain responded
- There are diverse intelligences
- they are not going to be exactly
- teamed up
- deep one
- of Alaska
- by calling back
- like ours
- day talk to aliens
- on this planet
- ever
- a 20-minute period
- place

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about whales?
- What would you like to talk to a whale about?
- What do whales talk to each other about?
- How useful is this research?
- How might this research help us talk to aliens?
- What questions would you like to ask an alien?
- What is your favourite species of whale?
- What would life be like if we could talk to animals?

Spelling

- a rnvcotasieon with a whale
- talk to leians
- sent a contact call into the ceon
- off the oacst of Alaska
- Twain heard the call and osprndeed
- the first ever muocniacitmon
- opsefsror Brenda McCowan
- like a erseis of greetings
- cesitnsits made the same call 36 times
- the tivreanls between each call
- There are ivedsre intelligences on this planet
- be xcaetly like ours

Answers – Synonym Match

1. j	2. e	3. g	4. b	5. d
6. a	7. h	8. i	9. c	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Whales

You think whales would be the best creatures to talk to. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these to talk to (and why): eagles, ants or snakes.

Role B – Eagles

You think eagles would be the best creatures to talk to. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these to talk to (and why): whales, ants or snakes.

Role C – Ants

You think ants would be the best creatures to talk to. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these to talk to (and why): eagles, whales or snakes.

Role D – Snakes

You think snakes would be the best creatures to talk to. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these to talk to (and why): eagles, ants or whales.

Speaking – Creature Chat

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to talk to at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Whales
- Snakes
- Eagles
- Ants
- Cockroaches
- Jellyfish
- Lions
- Koalas

Answers – True False

1	T	2	F	3	F	4	F	5	F	6	T	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.