

Sample Lesson #3

Aaron Coleman, Marine Animal Trainer

When she was in third grade, Aaron Coleman dreamed of being an animal trainer. Thirteen years later she was swimming with dolphins, sea lions, and killer whales. Here is an interview with Aaron.

What does a marine animal trainer do?

We hold training sessions, prepare the animals' food, and work with veterinarians to keep the animals healthy. We thaw fish and weigh it. It's our job to make sure each animal has good nutrition. We also give them vitamins and medicines that the vet has ordered.

What are the training sessions like?

There are three different types. In a play session, the goal is safe play for the animal and trainer. My favorite game is hide-and-seek. The trainers hide outside the pool, and the whales swim around looking for us. When they find us, they squirt us with water! Play sessions help build trust between animals and trainers.

In a learning session, we teach new behaviors, and the animals practice them. The third type is the show session where the animals perform in front of an audience. They show off some of their tricks and their natural behaviors. We reward them with fish, toys, or a back rub.

How did you prepare for your job?

An animal trainer studies science in college. We become expert swimmers. And, we must learn to communicate well with others. Trainers must often speak to groups of people. We explain why marine animals are important and how people can work together to protect them.

What is the best and hardest part of your job?

I get to have friendships with animals. I learn what they enjoy and what they can do. And I help them show others how amazing they are! Sometimes, however, it's hard to communicate. Animals can't tell you if they're hungry, bored, or having a bad day. We have to find ways to understand them and help them to understand us.



RI.3.1 1. List three types of marine animals that Aaron trains.

RI.3.1 2. Mark each phrase with the appropriate letter: P if it occurs during a *play session*, L for a *learning session*, or S for a *show session*.

_____ build trust	_____ perform for audience
_____ show tricks	_____ practice new behaviors
_____ teach new behaviors	_____ safe play

CCRA.R.1 3. Why should marine animal trainers be expert swimmers?

L.3.4.A 4. From details in the passage, you can tell that marine animals are animals that _____.

A) cannot talk	C) live in water
B) are in zoos	D) perform in the circus

RI.3.4 5. Match each word with its clue.

_____ behavior	A) to share thoughts and feelings
_____ expert	B) actions, tricks
_____ perform	C) highly skilled
_____ audience	D) animal doctor
_____ veterinarian	E) to show a skill
_____ communicate	F) people watching a performance

RI.3.6 6. By reading the interview, you can tell that Aaron _____.

A) respects marine animals and enjoys working with them
 B) worked hard to make her dream come true
 C) is studying to be a veterinarian
 D) both A and B