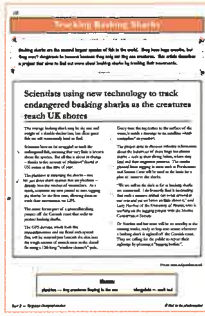


# Tracking Basking Sharks



## Question Book:

Year 5, pages 18-19

## Author / Source:

www.independent.co.uk

## Genre:

Non-fiction — news article

## Cross-curricular links:

- Science (marine organisms)
- Art (drawing activity)

## Introduction

Basking sharks are huge fish — the largest recorded specimen was more than 12 m long. As filter feeders, they use their exceptionally large mouths and specially-adapted gills to filter plankton from seawater. This article describes a project which aims to find out more about basking sharks by tagging them with GPS devices and tracking their movements. Before reading the article with the class, show pupils some pictures of basking sharks and explain how they are adapted to feed on plankton.

## Answers

1. E.g. Because basking sharks eat plankton, and the plankton in British waters is attracting them to areas where scientists can study them.
2. E.g. Sharks will be fitted with tracking devices, which will calculate their location every time they come to the surface.
3. E.g. difficult to find
4. E.g. She thinks they're really interesting because they're huge but also very mysterious.
5. "ready to leap into action"
6. E.g. Because scientists wouldn't have had the right technology, like satellites or GPS, 100 years ago.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. I think it's a good idea because basking sharks are endangered and tracking them might help scientists to protect them. Also, we don't know much about the sharks, so it's a good idea to find out more about them by tracking them.

## Extra Activities

- Get pupils to briefly summarise the information in the article by writing a few words under each of the following headings: 'who', 'what', 'where' and 'why'.
- As a class, discuss the presentation and language features of news articles and their effect on the reader. Emphasise the use of headlines in news articles to engage the reader's interest. Do pupils find the headline of this article engaging? Can they think of a better one? Show pupils some other news articles without their headlines and ask pupils to suggest headlines for them.
- Emphasise how little we know about the behaviour and life-cycle of basking sharks, and then ask pupils to write a short story from the perspective of a basking shark, imagining its secret life under the sea.
- Assign pupils different marine organisms that can be found around the British coast. Pupils should research their organism, then draw a picture of it and write a short passage describing it. The pupils' work could be used to create a classroom display about British sea life.

hermit crabs, curlews,  
herring gulls, otters,  
grey seals, kelp,  
marram grass