

SCHOOLWIDE BOOK REVIEW

Do Whales Have Belly Buttons? Questions and Answers About Whales and Dolphins by Melvin and Gilda Berger

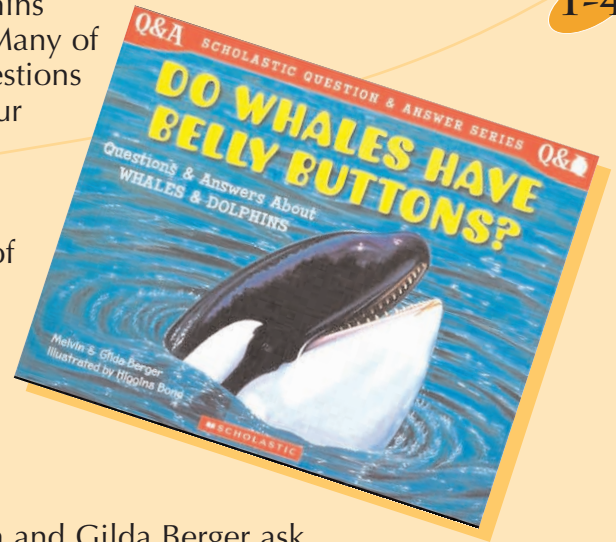
Scholastic, ISBN: 0439085713

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Do whales have bad breath? (Yes, it smells fishy!) Why do dolphins whistle? (It helps them keep in touch!) Do whales have teeth? (Many of them do!) These are just some of the more than seventy-five questions and answers from Scholastic's "Q & A" series that will amuse your students.

Authors Melvin and Gilda Berger are avid whale watchers and have written several books on the subject to share with readers of all ages their fascination with these creatures. Their expertise, in fact, extends to many of Mother Nature's creatures as other Scholastic titles attest. Check some of these out next:

- *How Do Bats See in the Dark?*
- *How Do Flies Walk Upside Down?*
- *How Do Frogs Swallow with Their Eyes?*



In *Do Whales Have Bellybuttons?* as in all of their books, Melvin and Gilda Berger ask humorous, curiosity-inducing questions and offer straightforward and interesting facts that answer them. The Bergers have an exceptional ability to couch questions in a thought-provoking way that pique students' sense of wonder, and the factual answers they provide are presented in concise, clear, conversational language that students young and old will readily understand.

The colorful drawings by Higgins Bond enhance the textual explanations and provide visual interest. Her illustrations bring these creatures to life in their oceanic environment, and her realistic style lends a photographic quality to the up-close-and-personal images of these incredible cetaceans.

In the Classroom

When you have this book in your classroom, consider doing a whole-class read-aloud over several days. The facts that fill this nonfiction book teach important science concepts about marine mammals. In addition, students have the opportunity to see how writers use their passions, their expertise, and their own personal interests to generate ideas for writing projects.

- Have student groups investigate specific facts using this book.
- Incorporate some of the content-specific vocabulary from the text, such as those below, onto a Word Wall:
 - blowhole
 - blubber
 - cetaceans
 - dorsal fin
 - flukes
 - mammal
 - migration

- The Bergers work collaboratively to produce their texts, something students can do with their writing partners. Have them choose a person, place, or thing, like the Berger's did, and make a list of questions about it. They can conduct research, observe, sketch, and ask and answer questions in creating their writing piece.

Oh, by the way, the answer to the title question is yes, whales do have bellybuttons!

Look for *Do Whales Have Belly Buttons?* as a featured text in our Testing Fundamentals Program.