

BRAILLE READING PASSAGE: WORKSHOP 6

Strong Groupsigns

Shedd Aquarium

Are you looking for a place to have a bit of family fun? Go no further than Chicago's Shedd Aquarium. This tourist spot is located near the lakefront, not too far from the heart of downtown. Drive to town and park nearby or use the public transit system to arrive at the Shedd.

The aquarium started as a gift from philanthropist John Shedd, CEO of Marshall Field and Company. He wanted to give back to Chicago. Shedd donated \$2 million towards the project during February 1924. Though he did not live to see it built, the board of directors carried out Shedd's plans. The aquarium structure, designed by a famous Chicago architecture firm, resembles an octagonal neoclassical temple. The aquarium has grown twice, once with 25 feet of space dug down from the street level. The square footage is now nearly double the size and houses vast habitats for large sharks and other aquatic animals.

Once at the Shedd, follow the map to the Wild Reef to get to the shark exhibits. You'll see sharks of all sizes and shapes. Weighing 100-200 lbs., the Sandbar Shark is the largest shark from the exhibit. It likes swimming near the sandy bottom of the water. The light brown color of the Sandbar Shark allows camouflage with the sand so it can hunt less mighty and unsuspecting prey. The Zebra Shark is smaller. Adults have spots but babies, or "pups", are striped like zebras. The markings on the pups make them look like dangerous aquatic snakes, so predators steer clear from the babies. Adults can grow to eight feet and like swimming toward tight crevices to hunt for food.

Follow the signs to see Nickel, a rescued turtle who now makes the Shedd her home. Caught by a biologist from Florida who noticed her strange mannerisms, this turtle then lived with a rescue

group for a few years. The turtle did not show her natural water buoyancy, so she transferred to the Shedd. A medical exam at the aquarium showed a nickel lodged down her throat, which made it hard for her to swallow. This tough girl is now nickel-free and quite a survivor. Spot her swimming happily with other aquatic animals.

Complete the trip with a visit to the whale exhibit and then stay for the show. Whales can weigh over 2,100 lbs. With a blowhole at the top of the body and what looks like a smiling face, the whales are curious and full of fun. Whales like singing and making noises that resemble chirps, whistles, or foghorns. They like performing for the crowd and will jump, blow water, or they might offer a "kiss" on the cheek.

WHALES

Whales are the largest animals on Earth. They live in the ocean and breathe air. Whales are mammals, which means they have lungs and breathe through their blowholes. Whales are also known for their songs, which they use to communicate with each other. Whales are found in all of the world's oceans.

Whales are divided into two main groups: baleen whales and toothed whales. Baleen whales have a wide mouth filled with baleen, which is a comb-like structure made of keratin. They use baleen to filter food from the water. Toothed whales have a smaller mouth with a few large teeth. They use echolocation to find food. Whales are also known for their intelligence and social behavior. They live in groups called pods and have a complex social structure. Whales are also known for their ability to migrate long distances. Some whales migrate from the Arctic to the Antarctic and back again. Whales are a fascinating and important part of the ocean ecosystem.

