



# Just Big How Are Whales?

## Materials:

100 foot rope, marked off in one foot increments. You can combine two or three smaller lengths to achieve the full length of 100 feet.

## Objective:

Gain a sense of scale as you compare different species of whales to everyday items.

## Guiding Questions:

How big are whales?

How does the size of different whales compare with the size of common objects?

Cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) range in size from slightly smaller than 6 ft (1.8m) to 100 ft (30m). There are 88 species in all. This activity will help you get a sense of the variety of sizes in this group of aquatic mammals.

## Procedure



1. Mark the rope in one foot increments. To save time you could mark the rope every five or ten feet. We suggest making a double line for each ten foot increment.
2. Find a place (you may have to outside) where you can extend the rope to its full length. Using the table on the next page for reference, place a book, a hat, a stick or some other object at the measurements along the rope that match up with the animals on the table.
3. Measure yourself. Calculate how many of you it would take to equal the lengths of the whales listed in the table. Write those numbers in.
4. Look up the length of other objects, such as a school bus, your car, your favorite shirt, another animal, and calculate how many of that object it would take to equal the length of each of the whales.
5. Working in reverse, walk one end of the rope to the other end so that it is now half as long. What species does this represent?
6. Fold the rope in half again. Which species is this length?
7. Fold the rope in half once more. You should now be at a length of 12.5 feet. What animal, or animals, does this represent?



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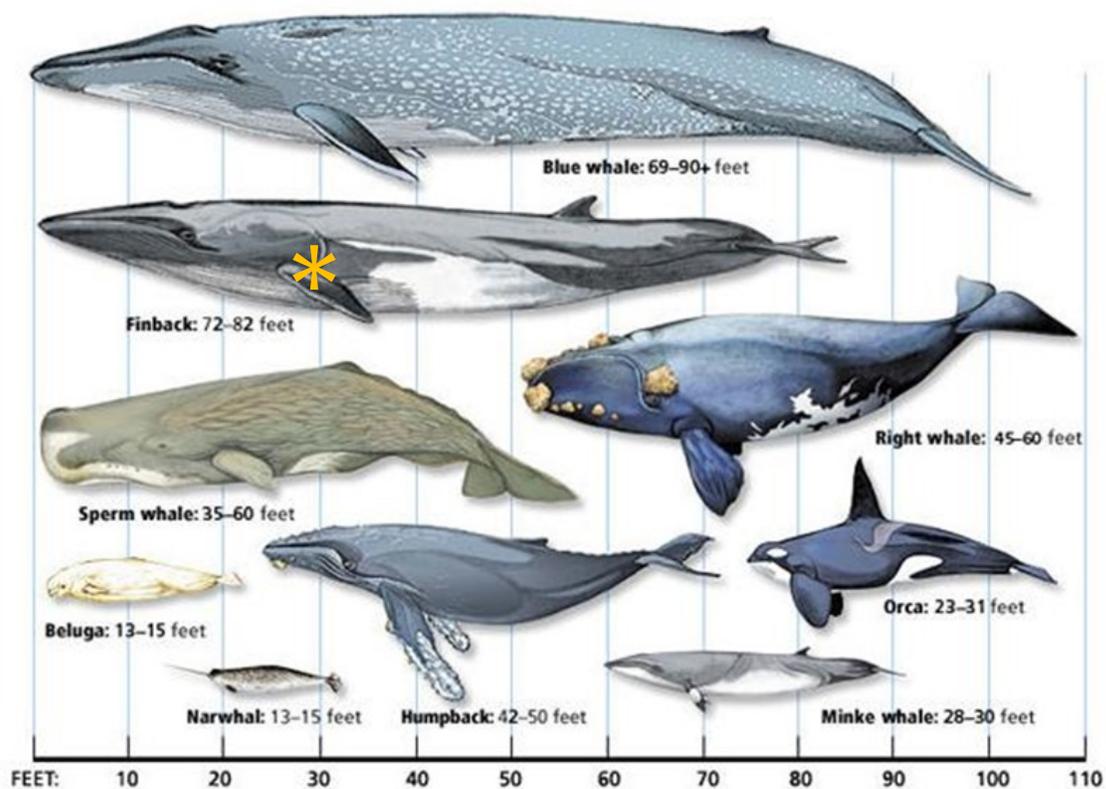
How do you match up to different whales?

How does the size of different whales compare with the size of common objects?

Cetacean	Average Length	Number of you lying head to toe that would equal the length of this whale	Number of other objects that would equal the length of this whale
Blue whale	100 feet (30 m)		
Finback whale	80 feet (24 m)		
Right whale	60 feet (18 m)		
Sperm whale	55 feet (17 m)		
Humpback whale	50 feet (15 m)		
Minke Whale or Orca	30 feet (9 m)		
Pilot whale	20 feet (6 m)		
Bottlenose dolphin	12.5 feet (3.8 m)		
Right whale calf	12.5 feet (3.8 m)		
Harbor porpoise	6 feet (1.9 m)		
Vaquita	5 feet (1.8 m)		



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Source: <https://ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/marine-mammals/what-largest-whale-cetacea-size-comparison-chart>