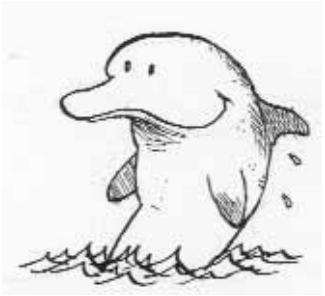
Answer Key



Dolphin Dive

How are dolphins like you and me—and bats? We're all warm-blooded, air-breathing *mammals*! Bats and humans obviously couldn't survive a life underwater—so how do dolphins do it? Well, for one thing, they have a layer of *blubber* under their skin. Blubber insulates their bodies, keeping them warm in chilly water.

Dolphins can also hold their *breath* a lot longer than we can—some as long as 20 minutes! Most of the time, however, they swim to the surface one or two times a *minute* to take a breath. Unlike people, dolphins don't need to lift their *head* out of water to breathe. An opening on top of their head, called a *blowhole*, lets air in and out. When dolphins surface and *exhale*, the hole opens with a burst of air and a spray of water.

Are you wondering how dolphins sleep if they have to surface so often to breathe? They use their noggin! One side of their *brain* sleeps while the other side stays awake. The side that's awake reminds them to come up for air.

How are dolphins like bats? Dolphins use *echolocation* to figure out what's around them. Bats send sound through air; dolphins send sound through *water*. The sound bounces off objects in their path and *echoes* back to them. The echoes tell them what lies ahead—a juicy mosquito or a flavorful fish!

OK, that makes sense, but how can dolphins possibly be like trees? As you know, each year a new layer of wood grows on most trees, forming a ring. By *counting* the rings on a tree stump, you can tell how old the tree is. Same with dolphins—sort of! Dolphins' teeth grow in layers each year. By counting the layers on a dolphin's *teeth*, you can tell her *age*.