

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Key Vocabulary	
<b>barren</b>	bleak and lifeless, lacking vegetation
<b><i>Blackfish</i></b>	a film that tells the story of Tilikum, an orca who was held in captivity at SeaWorld
<b>captivity</b>	the state of being held, imprisoned, enslaved, or confined
<b>coastal sanctuary</b>	a protected area along the shore where cetaceans (porpoises, dolphins, and whales) can be rehabilitated or live permanently in an ocean environment that maximizes their well-being and independence and is as close as possible to their natural habitat
<b>dialect</b>	a different form of a language that is spoken only by a portion of the group who speak the language
<b>grief</b>	deep sorrow or sadness
<b>pod</b>	a group of dolphins or whales

## Rose Makes a Splash for Orcas

Rose McCoy was 12 years old when she jumped in front of the SeaWorld float in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Rose Parade. She felt that the float's "orcas in the ocean" theme was ignoring the real facts about orcas in **captivity**. Here's her story in her own words:

I know baby orcas are taken away from their loving moms, leaving them thrashing and wailing with **grief**. Wild orcas never permanently leave their moms and **pods**. It's awful for SeaWorld to separate mothers and children, which it does all the time.

Orcas in the wild have the whole ocean to swim in, and they have dozens of friends and family members who love them. They are super-smart animals who work together as a team, talk to each other using special **dialects**, and swim for many, many miles every day, enjoying the currents and the sights of the sea. At marine mammal "**abusement**" parks all of this is taken away. Their world is shrunk from square miles to square feet. That's why I jumped in front of SeaWorld's Rose Parade float and the Macy's float to protest cruelty to orcas.

Intelligent orcas with individual personalities are reduced to cartoon "Shamus." How many audience members realize that every single orca performer, male or female, in SeaWorld's parks is called "Shamu"? Swimming in circles in SeaWorld's fishbowls makes orcas and other dolphins crazed, frustrated, and angry. Who wouldn't feel the same way if they were kidnapped, imprisoned in a tiny tank, and forced to perform silly tricks on command?

There is nothing that aquariums who keep orcas captive can do and no one they can hire who can erase the truth that those of us who saw ***Blackfish*** know. Customers are running away from supporting jailing marine mammals! Ticket sales are down, musicians are canceling shows, and schools are canceling field trips. SeaWorld can never make up for the lives it has destroyed. The only thing that it can do now is stop hurting more animals and release the orcas it has to **coastal sanctuaries**.

Recently, California state lawmaker Richard Bloom introduced a bill that would force SeaWorld to do the right thing by making it illegal for SeaWorld San Diego to hold orcas in **captivity**.

I wish I lived in California, because I would like to walk right up to Mr. Bloom and give him a big hug. It makes me sad that instead of working to free orcas, to have them live in the great oceans again, they are kept in small, barren tanks. We don't want to see orcas and other dolphins turned into circus clowns. Animals are so much better than that. We should be, too.  
—Rose



*Notes:* Captive breeding (forcing animals to mate and produce offspring) of orcas was banned in California in 2016 after Rose wrote this piece. SeaWorld stopped separating orca mothers from their babies after the film *Blackfish* was released.

“Rose Makes a Splash for Orcas” image and story adapted from *Animal Hero Kids: Voices for the Voiceless* by permission of the author, Susan Hargreaves. Photo: Emily McCoy

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## Comprehension Questions: Rose Makes a Splash for Orcas

1. Why did Rose jump in front of the SeaWorld float in the parades?

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2. Why does Rose call marine mammal parks “*abusement*” parks?

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3. What do you think the film *Blackfish* taught viewers about orcas?

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4. What does Rose want SeaWorld to do with the orcas it is still holding in **captivity**?

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# Answer Sheet:

## Rose Makes a Splash for Orcas

### 1. Why did Rose jump in front of the SeaWorld float in the parades?

**Answer:** Rose jumped in front of the SeaWorld float in the parades because she felt that the float's "orcas in the ocean" theme was ignoring the facts about orcas in captivity. (Literal)

### 2. Why does Rose call marine mammal parks "*abusement*" parks?

**Possible Answer:** Rose calls marine mammal parks, like SeaWorld, "*abusement*" parks because they take away the opportunity for orcas and other dolphins to swim in the ocean with dozens of friends and family members who love them. To be "abused" means to be treated cruelly, and Rose feels that since this is how marine mammals are treated by the parks, the correct word to use is "abuse" instead of "amuse." (Inferential)

### 3. What do you think the film *Blackfish* taught viewers about orcas?

**Answer:** Rose states that ticket sales are down, musicians are canceling shows, and schools are canceling field trips to SeaWorld, so *Blackfish* must have taught viewers that orcas are treated badly in captivity. (Inferential)

### 4. What does Rose want SeaWorld to do with the orcas it is still holding in captivity?

**Answer:** Rose wants SeaWorld to release the orcas in its parks into **coastal sanctuaries**. (Literal)