

## El Milagro

**Story Reference:** *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Humane Heroes Volume III, Story 1, "El Milagro"*

**Lesson Description:** When a bottlenose dolphin gives birth for the first time, sometimes she will not yet possess the maternal instincts to care for the baby. This situation happened at the American Humane Conservation-certified Brookfield Zoo in 2013. A team of 20, including a caregiver named Sofia, provided life support and baby animal care to a newborn dolphin named "Magic." Sofia and the animal care team became Magic's "moms," and he grew to be a happy, sociable, playful dolphin. In this lesson, students learn about an animal in human care and the special relationships that can transform both humans and animals. Students also explore the responsibilities of animal caregivers and the institutions they work with.

**ELA Alignment:**

- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Lesson Objectives:**

- Explore the individual and institutional responsibilities to care for animals.

**Vocabulary:**

- Husbandry

**Materials:**

- Summarizing Graphic Organizer (1 per student)

**Resource Links:**

- <https://seaworld.org/en/animal-info/animal-infobooks/bottlenose-dolphins/behavior>

**Introduction:** Quick write about animal caregiving (10 minutes)

- Tell students that today's lesson will begin with a brief writing exercise on animal caregiving. Write or project the following questions on the board and ask students to respond in writing to the following prompt for 3-5 minutes.
  - *In what ways are animals transformed through their relationships with people? In what ways are people transformed through their relationships with animals?*
- Call on one or two students to give a brief answer for each prompt.

**Read and analyze:** Analyze the central idea and supporting details (20 minutes)

- Prior to reading, hand out the Central Idea Graphic Organizer and introduce the following themes:
  - Friendship and self-sacrifice
  - Personal enrichment and dedication
- Tell students that as they read, they should cite details from the text that support one of the central ideas of the story.
- Direct students to read “El Milagro,” and individually complete the Central Idea Graphic Organizer.
- After completing the graphic organizer, tell students to find a partner and take turns summarizing the story aloud to each other. Encourage students to listen actively to their partners. Instruct the students to consider what information could be added to make the summary more thorough or what information could be omitted to make the summary more succinct. The listener should provide feedback on his or her partner’s summary. Give each partner 2–3 minutes to share his or her summary.

**Guided practice:** Compare individual and institutional responsibility to animals (12 minutes)

- Ask students to work with a partner to compile a list of responsibilities that individual animal caregivers might provide in zoos and aquariums based on information they have gathered from the story.
- Direct students to complete the Individual and Institutional Responsibilities handout.
- Once students have completed the handout, ask partner groups to share their responses to the following questions:
  - *List some examples of local animal caregivers and institutions (zoos and aquariums) who perform these responsibilities.*
  - *How might the ideas of caring and sacrifice be important to these individuals and the institutions that they work with?*

**Closing:** Revisit quick write from the beginning of the lesson (8 minutes)

- Ask students to return to their quick write. This time students should add to their response by answering the following questions:
  - *What can we learn from animal caregivers? What can we learn about caring for others by observing animal caregivers?*
  - *What can we learn from caring for animals that could apply to the conservation of their wild counterparts?*
  - *What are a community’s responsibilities to animals?*
- After students have added to their initial response, ask them to reflect whether their new answers were the same or different and why this might be so.

## CENTRAL IDEA

Identify the central idea	
Identify the main character and list some of his or her traits	
Identify details from the story that contribute to the central idea	
How does the story's ending contribute to the central idea?	
How does the zoo community contribute to the central idea?	

Write an objective summary of the text:

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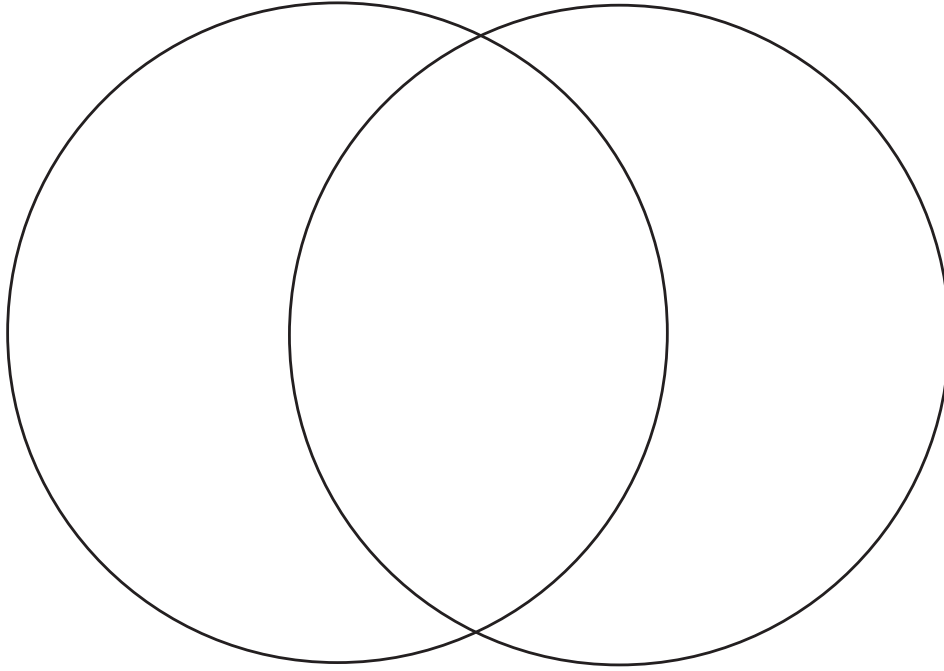
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# INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Individuals

Zoos and Aquariums



List some examples of local individuals and institutions who perform these responsibilities.

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How might the central idea of the story be important to these individuals and institutions?

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