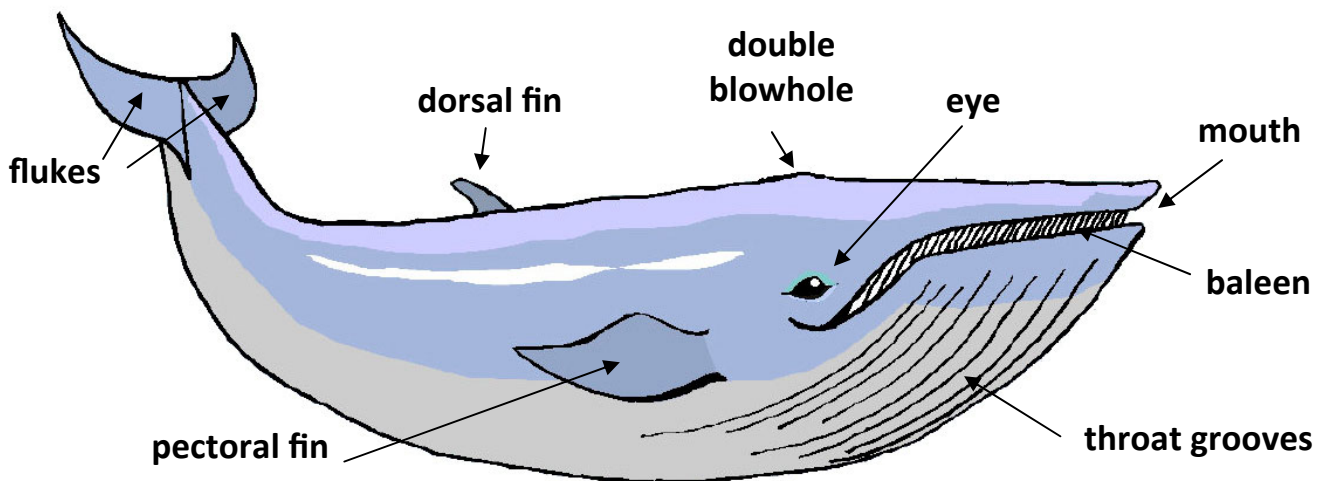


## Parts of a Baleen Whale

**W**hales are divided into two main groups: Toothed Whales and Baleen Whales. As the name suggests, Toothed whales have teeth, while Baleen Whales do not. The Baleen whale has a series of plates in its mouth that hang down from the gums in the upper jaw. These baleen plates are made of keratin, a material similar to that of fingernails, and they act as giant sieves. The whale takes in a gulp of seawater containing krill, small shrimp-like animals that live in seawater. The tongue of the whale then swells up like a balloon and pushes the water out through the baleen plates, trapping the krill between the plates so they can be eaten. A whale can eat up to a tonne of krill in one feeding session. Some baleen whales have a series of folds or grooves on their throats and chest which can be stretched. These increase the size of the mouth so that a larger gulp of seawater and krill can be taken in.



Can you match the descriptions below with the different parts of a baleen whale:

1. Made up of muscles and fibrous tissue, these move up and down to propel the animal through the water.
2. Plates inside the whale's mouth that hang like a curtain from the upper jaw. They act like a giant sieve, filtering food from the water.
3. Folds of skin and blubber that can expand when feeding, increasing the amount of water the whale's mouth can hold.
4. Holes through which the whale breathes air.
5. On the whale's back, helping to move it through the water more efficiently.
6. The whale uses these to see.
7. These are large and paddle-shaped and are located on either side of the whale's body. They help with movement and defence.
8. The whale opens this wide to draw in water and food.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

Answers on page 13