



Swimming with SHARKS!

- 1 Have you ever gone swimming with sharks? I have!

Last July I joined Dave Armfield on one of his great white diving trips. Dave operates the *'Sharks Up Close Adventure Tours'* out of Cape Town, South Africa. These adventures, or swims as Dave calls them, are not quite as dangerous as they sound. A diver is lowered into the water inside a

steel shark-proof cage. Dave told me that the cage was strong and completely safe — unless you stick your arm through the bars.

- 2 Our tour left Cape Town early one Monday morning with a team of eight: Dave and Karl, his deck hand, along with six paying passengers. Dave told me if the weather is fine they run a five-day tour every week

from May to October. He said this was the best time to 'meet' a great white, the most feared shark in the ocean.

- 4 That night Dave explained that we were moored right above *Shark Alley*, a six-metre deep channel that flows between Dyer and Geyser Islands. He went on to tell us that at this time of year it was full of great white sharks. I didn't sleep too well that night.
- 5 Maeve, a young teacher from Ireland, was given the honour of the first swim. She told me she had wanted to swim with the sharks ever since she was a little girl. As she climbed into the cage I asked if she had ever seen the movie *Jaws*. She just laughed.
- 6 As each person climbed out of the cage after their dive, they talked excitedly about what they had seen underwater. Hans was so excited we thought he would never stop talking. Ray claimed he'd seen eleven sharks in The Alley. I was starting to get a little nervous.
- 7 Eventually it was my turn to climb into the cage. Karl handed me the underwater camera and I climbed in. I adjusted my mask and tested the air tank one last time. Next, I signalled to Karl to show I was ready. The cage lifted off the deck and soon it was swinging out over the stern of the Sea Dragon. There was no escape now, locked in a steel cage dangling over

the deep water. What a lovely name — Shark Alley!

- 8 Within moments I was underwater. I couldn't see anything. Perhaps all the sharks had gone home for lunch. Suddenly, in the distance, I thought I saw a shadow. I peered through the bars, trying to distinguish the shape. Bump. What was that? Did the cage move? I turned quickly to see a massive shape glide past me. A great white! It was close enough to touch. My heart was beating so fast I thought it would burst out of my chest. Then another drifted past, and another. They didn't seem to pay any attention to me. I relaxed a little. I watched in amazement as the next monster brushed past the cage. It was probably six-metres long. This was pretty cool. I was starting to enjoy myself.
- 9 Bang! Something big crashed into the cage. The force knocked me heavily against the side. I felt as if I was tangled up in something. It was my arm. It had gone through the horizontal viewing slot! My arm was outside, ready for any shark to snack on. In blind panic I tried to free my shoulder. I tugged and tugged but it wasn't moving — it was stuck. "Slow down," I told myself. "Think." I got about two seconds thinking time before I saw something dark move in from behind. A chill went right through me. I was about to become a shark's dinner. I leaned back and tilted my head out to the right, hoping to see what was approaching. All

of a sudden I was free, my arm was back inside the cage. The strange angle I had twisted into when I tried to look over my shoulder had released my arm. I watched as the great white skimmed along the cage.

10 When I finally stepped out of the cage and onto the deck, I asked Karl how long I had been underwater. He said about fifteen minutes. It seemed a lot less. I found I couldn't stop talking about what I had experienced, just like everyone else who had taken a turn in the cage. I think it's the adrenaline rush you get from being so close to the massive jaws. It wasn't until I'd calmed down that I realised I had a really sore shoulder.

11 I swam with the sharks four more times on that trip and each time was just as exciting. The thrill of being less than a metre from these amazing creatures never lost its tension. Will I go face-to-face with a great white again? Yes — the next time I'm at the local aquarium!



Questions

- 1 How many people were on the boat?
 - a four
 - b six
 - c eight
- 2 Who saw eleven sharks in Shark Alley?
 - a Dave
 - b Hans
 - c Ray
- 3 Where did they start the trip?
 - a Cape Town
 - b Shark Alley
 - c Geyser Island
- 4 Why was the narrator thrown against the side of the cage?
 - a He lost his balance.
 - b A shark hit the cage.
 - c A strong wave hit the boat.
- 5 What was the name of Dave's boat?
 - a Sea Dragon
 - b Shark Alley
 - c Shark Hunter
- 6 The narrator had a big scare during his first swim. How do we know he got over this?
 - a He still goes to see sharks in aquariums.
 - b He made four more swims on that trip.
 - c He still likes to write reports about shark trips.

Vocabulary

Match the words from the text to the clues. The brackets show the text sections ().

horizontal distinguish moored
tension adrenaline

- 7 Secured a ship so it can't move (4)
- 8 To recognise and tell something apart (8)
- 9 To be flat and level (9)
- 10 A hormone released due to stress (10)
- 11 To have high pressure and anxiety (11)

Grammar

The words in **BLUE** appear in the text. Match them by writing the correct synonym shown in **RED**.
E.g. *under* / *below*

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 12 strong | anchored |
| 13 prepare | anxious |
| 14 moored | robust |
| 15 nervous | organise |

Back To The Text...

- 16 Very bad weather
 - a could affect Dave's business.
 - b would make no difference to Dave's business.
- 17 The purpose of this text is
 - a to explain shark tours.
 - b to recount an experience.
- 18 Another good name for this text would be:

- a South African Tours
- b Too Close for Comfort

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Maeve climbed into the cage.
b The narrator climbed into the cage.
- 20 a Hans wouldn't stop talking.
b Dave explained that they were right above Shark Alley.
- 21 a His arm slid outside the cage.
b The shark crashed into the cage.

Think About This

- 22 Why are *Shark Alley* and *Jaws* printed in bold italics?
 - a They are movie names.
 - b To give them greater emphasis.
 - c You should do this for all proper nouns.
- 23 The illustration on the front of the card refers to the text in which of the following sections?

a eight	b nine
c ten	d eleven

Challenge Option

Research: List the names of four different types of shark.

