

English

TED ED

Why you should read Moby Dick

1. Warmer

Match the novels on the left with the correct genre on the right. Can you add one more per genre?

To kill a Mockingbird <i>Harper Lee</i> <i>Classic</i>	Detective and Mystery
The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse <i>Charlie Mackesy</i> <i>Comic Book or Graphic Novel</i>	Horror
The adventures of Sherlock Holmes <i>Sir Arthur Conan Doyle</i> <i>Detective and Mystery</i>	Classics
The Hobbit <i>J.R.R. Tolkien</i> <i>Fantasy</i>	Historical Fiction
The Help <i>Kathryn Stockett</i> <i>Historical Fiction</i>	Comic Book or Graphic Novel
Carrie <i>Stephen King</i> <i>Horror</i>	Fantasy
Gone Girl <i>Gyllian Flynn</i> <i>Suspense and Thrillers</i>	Science Fiction
Where the crawdads sing <i>Delia Owens</i> <i>Literary Fiction</i>	Romance
I know why the caged bird sings <i>Maya Angelou</i> <i>Biographies and Autobiographies</i>	Literary Fiction
Pride and Prejudice <i>Jane Austen</i> <i>Romance</i>	Biographies and Autobiographies
The Hunger Games <i>Suzanne Collins</i> <i>Science Fiction</i>	Short Stories
This is how you lose her <i>Junot Diaz</i> <i>Short Stories</i>	Suspense and Thrillers

In what genre would you find MOBY DICK by Herman Melville?

_____ *Classic* _____

2. 'Moby Dick' or 'The Whale' is a story of a group of sailors aboard the Pequod lead by Captain Ahab. They are on a quest to take revenge on a giant white sperm whale. The giant white sperm whale had bitten off one of Captain Ahab's legs during his previous voyage, hence his madness.

Have a look at following important quotes from the novel Moby Dick.

Call me Ishmael. (This is the opening line of the classic novel.)

In life, the visible surface of the Sperm Whale is not the least among the many marvels he presents....

I try all things, I achieve what I can.

• What do you think each one means?

3. Guess what the following might refer to in the video. Make notes.

- November Ishmael's feelings (damp, drizzly November)
- 1851 the year the novel was published
- US Whaling Industry was at its height
- Nantucket in New England – where the Pequod set sail
- huge shadows of ships What would the whales think?

4. Understand the introduction. Read the first part from the introduction. The sentences are not in the right order.
Mark them from 1 to 9. The first sentence has been done already.

Instead, it's a multi-layered exploration of not only the intimate details of life aboard a whaling ship, but also subjects from across human and natural history, by turns playful and tragic, humorous, and urgent. 7

On the surface, the book is the story of Captain Ahab's hunt for revenge against Moby Dick, the white whale who bit off his leg. 5

The lid of an immense snuffbox. 3

A mountain separating two lakes. 1

These seemingly unrelated images take us on a tour of a sperm whale's head in Herman Melville's "Moby Dick." 4

But though the book features pirates, typhoons, high-speed chases, and giant squid, you shouldn't expect a conventional seafaring adventure. 6

Ishmael starts out telling his own story as he prepares to escape the "damp and drizzly November in [his] soul" by going to sea. 9

A room papered floor to ceiling with bridal satins. 2

The narrator guiding us through these explorations is a common sailor called Ishmael. 8

Now watch the first part of the video (0.00 – 1.10) and see if you got the right order.

Continue and watch the rest.

[Sascha Morrell: Why should you read "Moby Dick"? | TED Talk](#)

5. Comprehension questions

1. Which of the following is not mentioned in *Moby Dick*??

- a. a giant squid
- b. a white shark
- c. Nantucket
- d. Shakespeare

2. Why does Ishmael decide to go to sea?

- a. to help Captain Ahab with his revenge
- b. to join the whale industry
- c. to escape a 'damp drizzly November'
- d. to visit Nantucket

3. The book experiments with writing styles. Which one is mentioned?

- a. William Shakespeare
- b. Leo Tolstoy
- c. Jane Austen
- d. Charles Dickens

4. Where was the epicentre of the whaling industry based?

- a. California
- b. South America
- c. New England
- d. Canada

6. Describe the following characters

Ishmael	Narrator of the story and crew member of the Pequod
Moby Dick	The white bull sperm whale – main antagonist
Captain Ahab	Tyrannical captain of the Pequod. He wants to kill Moby Dick
Queequeg	The harpooner of the Pequod.

7. Moby Dick is a classic for a reason. It has been around for more than 150 years and been read not only for leisure but also at school and university. Why do you think that is?
