

Read the story below and use the evidence to decide if the shark is dangerous.



Shark!

¹My sister and I dropped off the back of the boat into the water with our scuba gear on. ²It was our first ocean scuba dive. ³I looked down and saw the coral reef 20 feet below us. ⁴It was beautiful with fish of every size and color everywhere. ⁵Then the instructor touched our shoulders and pointed to a shark swimming just beyond the reef. ⁶The shark was as big as I was! ⁷The instructor told us before our dive that we might see a shark, but she also said that most of the sharks she sees around the reef are small and not dangerous. ⁸We all stopped to watch the shark. ⁹I thought about my older brother's story at dinner last night about a fishing boat that had seen large sharks eating a seal last week. ¹⁰The instructor looked at my sister and me, and then signaled for us to follow her as she continued down to the reef.

1. Identify the evidence for each conclusion.

The shark is dangerous.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The shark is not dangerous.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. After identifying and evaluating the evidence, do you think this is a dangerous shark? Circle your answer.

Yes

No

Use complete sentences to explain your answer.

Answers

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1. Evidence for dangerous: 6, 7, 9

Sentence 6 tells us the shark is big, which could be evidence that the shark is dangerous. Not all big sharks are dangerous, but big sharks are more likely to be dangerous than small sharks. Sentence 7 tells us that most sharks that visit the reef are not dangerous, but some dangerous sharks visit the reef. Sentence 9 tells us that people on a fishing boat had seen large sharks eating a seal. Sharks that attack and eat seals are considered dangerous, so the large shark by the reef could be one of those sharks.

Evidence for not dangerous: 7, 10

Sentence 7 tells us that most sharks that visit the reef are not dangerous so this is evidence that this shark probably isn't dangerous. Sentence 10 tells us that the instructor signaled for the children to follow her down to the reef. This is evidence that the shark is not dangerous.

2. No.

Some evidence is much more important than other evidence. The instructor saw the shark, watched the shark, and then wanted the children to follow her down to the reef, not stay still or head back to the boat. If the instructor thought the shark was dangerous, she would probably lead them back to the boat or tell them to stay still, not continue down to the reef. This evidence is much more important than the size of the shark or the older brother's story about the fisherman because the dive instructor probably knows which sharks in the area are dangerous and which are not. A critical thinker always weighs all the evidence to determine which pieces of evidence are the most important.