

Name _____



Remembering Keiko

In 2003, Keiko, the world's most famous killer whale, died unexpectedly. He was loved by millions. Here's his life story. After reading it, fill in the years in the timeline. Some are done for you.

Keiko was born in the Atlantic Ocean, near Iceland, around 1977. At age two, he was captured by a fishing boat, taken from his family, and sold to a local aquarium. Three years later, a Canadian marine park bought Keiko and trained him to do tricks. In 1985, he was sold to a Mexican amusement park, put in a small, dirty tank, and made to perform.

Eight years later, a Hollywood studio made the movie *Free Willy*. Keiko starred as a mistreated whale rescued by a boy. But fans soon learned that Keiko's real story didn't have a happy ending. Living in poor conditions, he was sick and underweight. A year later, the Free Willy Foundation, an animal protection group, fought to give him a better life. They hoped to someday return him to his ocean home and family.

In 1995, the Mexican amusement park gave Keiko up. The following year, he was flown to the Oregon Coast Aquarium. There, he had much more room to swim—in a big tank with natural seawater. Thanks to careful medical care, Keiko gained 1,000 pounds. His journey to freedom had begun!

By 1997, Keiko was in excellent health and learning to catch fish on his own. The next year, he was allowed to live in a natural sea pen in a bay in his native Iceland. Three years later, he was communicating with other whales and competing for food. His chances for surviving on his own looked better than ever. The next summer, he left his sea pen and traveled 1,000 miles to the coast of Norway. Keiko spent two months on his own, without any help from humans. Free at last!

In December of 2003, at about age 26, Keiko died. Veterinarians believe the cause was pneumonia. Keiko will be missed by millions of people.

Keiko's Life: A Timeline

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1977 | Born in Iceland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Taken from his mother |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Moved to a marine park in Ontario, Canada |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bought for \$350,000 by Reino Aventura, a Mexican amusement park, and put in a dirty tank too small for him |
| 1993 | Stars in a Warner Bros. movie called <i>Free Willy</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Free Willy Foundation formed to help Keiko |
| 1995 | Given up by Mexican amusement park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Airlifted by UPS to a clean Oregon aquarium, where he learns not how to do tricks but how to live free |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Learns to catch fish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Moves to a natural sea pen in Iceland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Interacts more with wild whales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Leaves his sea pen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dies at age 26 |

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