**Article of the Week (AoW) Directions**

1. Mark your confusion – either highlighting or underlining.

2. Mark up the text. Annotate the article with comments, questions, inferences, etc. You can use a variety of sentences, phrases, and symbols to show your thinking.

3. Write a developed paragraph response to one of the prompts below.

**Activists say ending SeaWorld orca shows not enough**

Source: Julie Watson and Mike Schneider/Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Animal rights activists applauded SeaWorld's plans to end its orca shows at its San Diego park but said the company should phase out its captivity of killer whales altogether.

SeaWorld Entertainment Inc. announced Monday that it will end orca shows at its San Diego park after visitors at the tourist attraction made it clear they prefer seeing killer whales act naturally rather than doing tricks.

CEO Joel Manby told investors the park — where the iconic "Shamu" show featuring killer whales doing flips and other stunts debuted decades ago — will offer a different kind of orca experience focusing on the animal's natural setting and behaviors, starting in 2017.

California Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff, who plans to introduce federal legislation to end captive orca breeding, said ending the shows is a good first step but doesn't go far enough.

"The fact still remains that as long as SeaWorld holds orcas in captivity, the physical and psychological problems associated with their captivity will persist," he said.

The Orlando, Florida-based company has seen revenue drop since the 2013 release of the documentary "Blackfish" that examined how orcas respond to captivity. It chronicles the case of Tilikum, a killer whale that caused the death of trainer Dawn Brancheau in 2010 by pulling her into a pool at SeaWorld Orlando.

Attendance has dropped the most at the San Diego location, and the decision to end orca shows will be limited for now to that park, the original home of Shamu, its first orca.

The shows will continue at the other two SeaWorld parks in Orlando and San Antonio, Texas.

The killer whale shows at the Shamu stadium in San Diego were the park's main draw in the 1970s and helped build SeaWorld as a top tourist attraction. Trainers would ride the whales in the giant pool before getting out and signaling for the orca to slap its tail in the water to splash spectators in a "splash zone."

After Brancheau's death, trainers stopped going in the water during the shows, but they continue to swim with the killer whales while training them.

Manby told investors Monday that California customers want to see a less theatrical production, so the new attraction will have a strong conservation message.

"They want the orca experience to be activities the whales do in the wild," Manby said. "Things they perceive as tricks, they don't like as well."

However, that's not "universal across our properties," he added.

The news came days after SeaWorld Entertainment Inc. reported that its third-quarter earnings missed Wall Street expectations.

SeaWorld earlier this year announced plans for a $100 million expansion of the killer whale tanks in San Diego to boost attendance, but the California Coastal Commission made approval of the project, dubbed "Blue World," contingent on SeaWorld agreeing not to breed, transfer or sell any of its captive orcas at the park.

Manby called the ruling — which SeaWorld plans to fight in court — a bad precedent for not only SeaWorld but all zoos and aquariums. He indicated to investors that the company might shelve the San Diego project.

"We certainly know with the regulatory environment out there that happened with orcas, and some of what happened in California, with the reputation out there, I think we would be foolish if we didn't look at other options," Manby said.

He announced that the company is considering adding hotels at its parks, starting with San Diego, to attract overnight visitors.

SeaWorld has reached an agreement with a hotel developer to embark on the exploratory phase.

**Respond to one of the following prompts. Use the a separate sheet of paper.**

1. Do you agree with Sea World’s decision to stop the live orca shows? Why or why not?
2. Should Sea World no longer keep orcas in captivity, not just end the live shows? Use information from the article to support your ideas.
3. Select a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph and respond to it.