Harp Seals

Harp seals spend most of their time diving and swimming in the icy cold waters of the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. They are able to stay under water for 15 minutes while hunting for fish and crustaceans. They are sociable animals and enjoy the company of other seals. They are gray in color with harp-shaped rings on their backs. Older seals return to the ice each year to molt and grow a new layer of skin and fur.

Baby seals are born on packs of ice floating in the ocean. They have a yellowish-white coat that soon turns completely white. They are known as “whitecoats” for about three weeks. During this time they just eat and sleep. They soon develop blubber and their coat turns gray with splotches. They are then ready to live on their own and their mothers leave them.

They can live for about 30 years in the wild.

1. What does the word sociable mean? ___________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

2. Why are baby seals called “whitecoats”? ___________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

3. Describe what an adult harp seal looks like. ___________________________
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**Color the seal above.
**Highlight the “star” words in the writing.