



Why the ocean matters

Lesson plan: the oxygen, food, weather and livelihoods the ocean provides, what threatens it, and a promise to help



Ages	8 to 11 (grades 3 to 6)
Time	45 to 60 minutes
Group	Up to 35 students, in groups of four
Where	Any classroom. No internet needed.
You need	The slides, one set of ocean gift cards per group, one promise poster per student, colouring pens

What students learn

- About half the oxygen we breathe comes from ocean phytoplankton.
- The ocean gives us food, weather, medicines, transport, fun and jobs.
- The main threats to the ocean.
- Simple things students can do to help.

Before the lesson

1. Print and cut one set of **ocean gift cards** per group, and one **promise poster** per student.

The lesson

- 1 Every second breath **5 minutes, slides 1 and 2**. Everyone takes two slow breaths.
- 2 Ocean gifts **20 minutes, slides 3 and 4**. Groups sort the cards, then share their surprises.
- 3 The ocean needs help **10 minutes, slides 5 and 6**. Discuss the threats and actions.
- 4 Promise poster **12 minutes, slide 7**. Students make their posters.
- 5 Wrap up **3 minutes, slide 8**. Discuss one or two questions.

Answers and what to listen for

One way to sort the cards: Food: Fish to eat, Salt, Seaweed that thickens ice cream; Air and weather: Oxygen to breathe, Rain, from water that evaporates, Heat spread around the world; Health and things we use: A painkiller made from cone snail venom, Ships carrying goods; Fun and jobs: Beaches to play on, Diving and tourism jobs, Jobs for fishers, Shells and sand for beaches. Many cards fit more than one group, which makes a good discussion.

Making it easier or harder

- **Younger groups:** sort the cards into just two groups: things we eat and everything else.

- **Older groups:** research one gift in more detail, such as how the cone snail painkiller was discovered.
- **Link:** the Plastic pollution module has a full lesson on taking action.

Curriculum links

- **Science:** living things and the environment, human impact.
- **Values education:** caring for the environment.
- **Ocean Literacy Principle 6:** the ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.

The teacher reading has the science behind every slide, with links to the sources.

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