



Why the ocean matters

Background reading for teachers

This reading gives you the background for each slide, with sources you can check.

Oxygen

About half of the world's oxygen is produced by phytoplankton photosynthesis in the ocean, and the other half by plants on land.¹ Estimates vary, so 'about half' is the safest way to put it.

Ocean gifts

Seaweeds farmed in the Philippines are used to make carrageenan, a thickener in foods such as ice cream. A painkiller called ziconotide is a synthetic version of a toxin from a cone snail. The ocean also absorbs heat and carbon dioxide, drives rain through evaporation, and carries most of the world's traded goods by ship.

Sources

1. National Geographic (2004). Source of half Earth's oxygen gets little credit. [nationalgeographic.com](https://www.nationalgeographic.com)
2. NOAA. How much oxygen comes from the ocean? oceanservice.noaa.gov

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