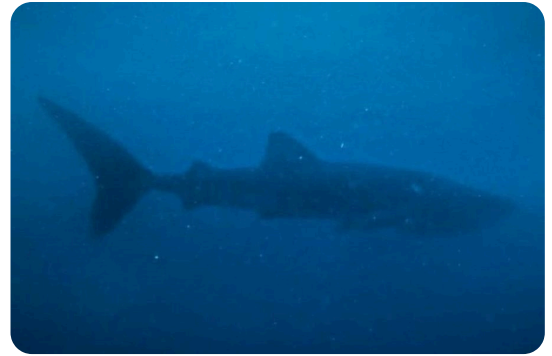




Meet the plankton

Lesson plan: what plankton are, the difference between phytoplankton and zooplankton, larvae in the plankton, and plankton food chains



Ages	8 to 11 (grades 3 to 6)
Time	45 minutes
Group	Up to 35 students
Where	Any classroom. No internet needed.
You need	The slides and one worksheet per student

What students learn

- Plankton are living things that drift with the currents.
- Phytoplankton make food from sunlight and about half our oxygen, and zooplankton are animals.
- Many sea animals, including corals, crabs and fish, start life as plankton.
- Plankton are the base of ocean food chains, even for the biggest fish.

Before the lesson

1. Print one **plankton explorer** worksheet per student.
2. If you have a microscope or hand lens, a jar of seawater or pond water makes a great extra.

The lesson

- 1 What are plankton? **10 minutes, slides 1 to 3.**
- 2 Oxygen and babies **10 minutes, slides 4 and 5.**
- 3 Giants and food chains **10 minutes, slides 6 and 7.**
- 4 Worksheet **12 minutes.** Students sort, order and draw.
- 5 Wrap up **3 minutes, slide 8.**

Answers and what to listen for

Answers: phytoplankton: the round diatom and the chain. Zooplankton: the copepod, the crab larva and the fish larva. Food chain: phytoplankton, zooplankton, small fish, bigger fish, shark.

Making it easier or harder

- **Younger groups:** focus on phytoplankton and zooplankton only.
- **Older groups:** find out what diatoms' glassy shells are made of.

Curriculum links

- **Science:** living things, food chains, habitats.
- **Ocean Literacy Principle 5:** the ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.

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

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