



Sharks and people

Lesson plan: why sharks are in trouble, six true Philippine and world stories, and what we can do



Ages	11 to 15. Younger groups can join in if you read the fact sheets aloud.
Time	60 to 75 minutes
Group	Up to 35 students, in six research groups
Where	Any classroom. No internet needed.
You need	The slides, the six research fact sheets (one per group, extra copies help), one research planner per group

What students learn

- Why sharks and rays are caught, and why they take so long to recover.
- How laws, sanctuaries and tourism can protect sharks, and how badly run tourism can harm them.
- Real examples from the Philippines: Oslob, Donsol and Monad Shoal.
- How to weigh different points of view and make a case using evidence.

Before the lesson

1. Print the six research fact sheets (A to F). Each group needs one sheet, and two or three copies of the same sheet make reading easier.
2. Print one research planner per group.
3. Decide the groups in advance if you can, mixing stronger and less confident readers.

The lesson

- 1 Remember this? 5 minutes, slides 1 and 2.** Bring back the two numbers from lesson 1. Ask: why would people kill so many sharks?
- 2 Why people catch sharks 10 minutes, slides 3 to 5.** Go through the reasons, including bycatch. Stress that most fishers are trying to feed their families. Then show how slowly sharks and rays breed, and compare what sharks are worth alive and dead. Leave the question at the end of slide 5 open for now.
- 3 Research time 20 minutes, slides 6 and 7.** Hand out one fact sheet per group. Groups read it together, discuss the questions at the bottom, and fill in the planner. Walk around and help groups find the key facts. With 60 minutes, cut this to 15.
- 4 Report back 15 minutes, slide 8.** Each group has two minutes. Everyone in the group says something. The rest of the class writes down one thing that surprised them. Taking the groups in order A to F tells a story: the threats first, then the solutions.

- 5 **The big question 10 minutes, slide 9.** Groups D and E lead the discussion, because they know the most about it. Take a vote. There is no single right answer here: the aim is for students to back up their view with evidence and to listen to the other side.
- 6 **Good news and promises 5 to 10 minutes, slides 10 to 12.** End on hope. Go through the timeline, talk about what students can do, and have everyone write a promise on the bottom of the planner.

What to listen for

- **A:** banning finning stopped the waste, but not the killing. Limits on how many sharks can be caught matter more.
- **B:** most sharks die close to shore, often by accident. Better gear, release rules and protected areas help.
- **C:** mantas breed so slowly that fishing them is not sustainable, and the medicine they are killed for does not work.
- **D and E:** both towns earn money from whale sharks. The difference is feeding, and what it does to the sharks.
- **F:** a town can earn more from living sharks than dead ones, if the sanctuary is enforced.

Handle with care

Some students' families fish for a living, sell fish, or serve shark fin soup at celebrations. Keep the focus on choices and systems, not on blaming people. Fishers are often the best protectors of sharks when protecting them pays, as the Donsol and Monad Shoal stories show.

Making it easier or harder

- **Younger groups:** read the fact sheets aloud and use only D, E and F, the three Philippine stories.
- **Older groups:** run slide 9 as a formal debate, or ask groups to write a one-page letter to a mayor or to BFAR arguing for one change.
- **Language:** shark is *pating* in Filipino and *iho* in Bisaya, and the whale shark is *butanding*. The Monad Shoal wardens are called Migo sa Iho, Friends of the Sharks.

Curriculum links

- **Science:** human impact on ecosystems, conservation and sustainable use of resources.
- **Social studies (Araling Panlipunan):** livelihoods, local government and managing shared resources.
- **Ocean Literacy Principle 6:** the ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.
- **Thinking skills:** reading for evidence, weighing viewpoints, debating.

The teacher reading has the background to every fact sheet, with links to the sources.

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