



SEA TURTLES

Learning Activity:

A Need for the Seas

Activity Type	Informative writing exercise
Focus Areas	Language arts
Time Required	30-45 minutes

Overview

Through this reading and writing exercise, students will discover ways that all living things around the world rely on oceans. To apply their reading comprehension, students will share ideas about what oceans provide for people, why it's important to keep our oceans healthy, and how that relates to protecting sea turtles. Using this information, students will compose an informative, persuasive letter to a friend or family member about why sea turtles and their ocean habitat are important and how the recipient of the letter can help protect them.

Objective

At the completion of the activity, students should be able to:

- Describe the current threats facing sea turtles and oceans.
- Present, in writing, an informative and explanatory opinion using logical reasoning to show why it's important to protect sea turtles and oceans.
- Discuss ways in which the students and their friends and families can help protect sea turtles and oceans.

Subject and Standards

Common Core Standards: English Language Arts

- RF. 3.3/4.3/5.3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- RF. 3.4/4.4/5.4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- RI. 3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- RI. 3.2: Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

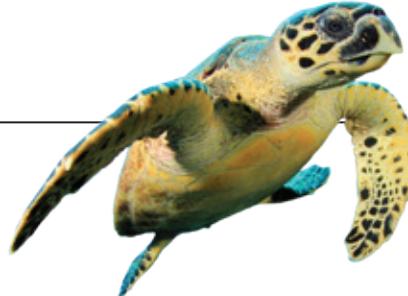


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- RI. 3.4/4.4/5.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3/4/5 topic or subject area.
- W. 3.1/4.1/5.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- W. 3.2/4.2/5.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- W. 3.4/4.4/5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W. 4.9/5.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Materials Needed

- [Sea Turtle Educator's Resource Guide](#) (for background reading)
- Per student: paper and writing utensil



Vocabulary

- **Bycatch:** the accidental capture of species such as dolphins, marine turtles, and seabirds when fishing for or capturing other types of marine species
- **Climate change:** Earth's increase in temperature, attributed directly or indirectly to human activity, that alters the global atmosphere
- **Ecotourism:** responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and promotes the welfare of local people
- **Habitat:** a natural environment in which plants and animals live, breed, and get their food, water, and shelter
- **Habitat loss:** the disappearance of natural environments (required for plants' and animals' survival) due to harvesting for human consumption and/or clearing to make way for agriculture, housing, roads, pipelines, and other forms of industrial development
- **Overharvesting:** excessively gathering, catching, hunting, or killing for human use, sport, or population control
- **Poaching:** hunting or fishing unlawfully



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- **Sustainable:** of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a natural resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged; an effective and innovative way to efficiently use natural resources and ensure their continued supply

Activity Procedure

Part 1: Introduction and Preparation

- Students should have an understanding of what makes a statement persuasive and opinionated versus explanatory and informative. If they do not, incorporate a brief overview of these principles (see next page) before beginning the activity.
- Distribute a handout you have created using content that is grade-level appropriate from the [Sea Turtle Educator's Resource Guide](#), including the sections on "Why Sea Turtles Matter," "The Threats Sea Turtles Face," and "What Kids Can Do."
- Both sea turtles and humans are dependent on the health of our oceans. As a result, the handout should also include the following points that outline the importance of healthy oceans to lives around the world, including:
 - Oceans generate a large amount of the clean air we breathe.
 - Oceans help shape the world's weather systems and shield us from the effects of climate change by soaking up heat that reaches the planet from the sun.
 - Over 3 billion people rely on fish and other seafood as a major source of food.
 - About 350 million jobs around the globe are linked to the ocean. The marine tourism industry alone provides 200 million jobs worldwide.
 - Ocean waves, winds, and currents offer clean, nonpolluting energy alternatives.
- Students can read this content quietly on their own or with a partner. Team reading is also an option: You can assign each member of the group a section to read aloud within the group.
- Hold a collective discussion reviewing and reflecting on the information in the handout. Use the Vocabulary section included in this activity to define and explain new terminology as it relates to the content. Students should take away from the reading and discussion the connection between protecting sea turtles, the health of the oceans, and why it matters to all of us.



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Part 2: Activity

- Now that students have a foundational understanding of why sea turtles and their ocean habitat matter, instruct them to use the handout as a reference and write a letter to a friend or family member. The letter should incorporate both informative and persuasive writing techniques:
 - Informative: explaining why the world needs sea turtles and oceans, and what is threatening them
 - Persuasive: providing reasons why it's important to help protect sea turtles and their ocean habitat, and offering suggestions for what the reader can do to help
- Suggest that students can take their letters home to deliver or mail them to the intended recipient.

Part 3: Discussion and Assessment

- Ask for volunteers to read their letters aloud, and encourage discussion about what makes each letter informative and persuasive.
- Encourage students to suggest how they, individually or as a class, can contribute to the protection of sea turtles and oceans, based on the "What Kids Can Do" content from the [Sea Turtle Educator's Resource Guide](#).

Extended Learning Options

- Start a class fundraiser to protect sea turtles and other wildlife and their habitats, using WWF's online fundraising tool, Panda Nation. Learn more at www.pandanation.org.
- Download the [WWF Together app](#) and explore the sea turtle segment. Use these interactive tools to help kids learn more about sea turtles and the threats they face.





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Additional Background Info

You can use the information found at the links below to enhance your discussion with the class, or you may want to share some links directly with students if you determine they are grade-level appropriate.

- **Article:** [Determined to Save Turtles](#)—shows how a WWF sea turtle monitoring program changed a young man's way of life
- **Video:** [Sea Turtle Tagging in Colombia](#)—reviews why and how scientists are tracking sea turtles to learn more about them
- **Article:** [Stemming the Tide](#)—tells of how with the help of people, WWF strives to improve the state of our oceans
- **Web Feature:** [WWF Oceans](#)—provides facts and information about ocean habitats and why they're so important

For more fun classroom activities with a focus on wild species and conservation, visit [wildclassroom.org](#).



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