

Common
Seas

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Learning resources for under 5s

OCEAN FOR BEGINNERS





Contents

Foreword	page 3
About Common Seas Education	page 4
Early Learning Goals (ELGs) & Activity Overview	page 5
ELG Learning Objectives	page 7
Ocean & Plastics Learning Objectives	page 13
Resource guidance	page 14

Activity themes:

Our Wonderful Ocean	page 15
Our Ocean and us	page 31
Our Ocean needs help	page 39



FOREWORD

Hello!

Welcome to Common Seas Education

Plastic is a complex and cross-cutting issue: it's about a lot more than the waste we can see around us. However, the fact we can see it – and can positively or negatively contribute to it – makes it an incredibly tangible and relevant issue, particularly for young people.

As our leaders, innovators, artists, engineers and citizens of tomorrow, it is essential children are empowered to access the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need be part of a better future.

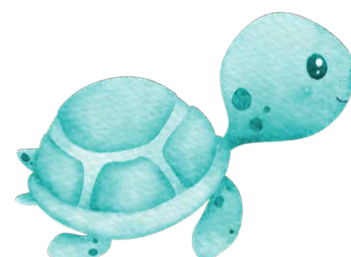
To enable this, children need to understand the world around them and the role they can play to care for it.

The Department for Education (DfE) strategy on Sustainability and Climate Change highlights the need for knowledge-rich, hands-on learning that will equip children with truth, hope and the ability to become agents of change. Common Seas, along with our partners, and expert collaborators, are helping to achieve this.

There is an increasingly clear link between education and sustainable behaviour change. Through quality resources, training and events for teachers and students, we are building a global community of schools taking action to protect our ocean, our health and our future.

Welcome aboard!

Sarah Duffy
Head of Education
Common Seas





OVERVIEW

About Common Seas Education

We believe children and young people should be equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience that allow them to thrive in a world affected by climate change, while helping to create a greener, fairer and more sustainable future.

Common Seas Education provides knowledge-rich, practical learning experiences about plastic, including its growing role in the climate crisis. In this way, our resources exist to give every child a deeper understanding of sustainability and climate change, while helping them create tangible, positive changes in their homes, schools and wider communities.

How to use Common Seas Education Resources

These resources have been designed to be an off-the-shelf teaching tool for your classroom. Of course, you know your students better than anyone and may want to adapt and change to suit your needs.

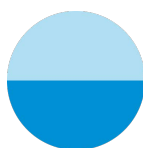
You will find a suite of supporting multimedia resources online, and these are referenced throughout the lesson plans. It is assumed that you have access to a digital projector or interactive white board to display these resources and accompanying slideshows. Students with individual devices can also view multimedia without needing an account.

The curriculum and beyond

The resources are aligned with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and early learning goals (ELGs).

We have also ensured these resources meet the requirements of the DfE Strategy on Sustainability and Climate Change.

Common Seas has utilised the UNESCO Learning Objectives for the ocean as a basis for creating a set of Ocean Plastics Learning Objectives to support the development of ocean literacy. These learning objectives are listed in following section.



**Common
Seas**

¹ UNESCO Ocean literacy for all: a toolkit <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260721> (see page 24)

Copyright 2025 This resource may be reproduced for educational purposes only

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Early Learning Goals

Throughout this sequence of activities, children will develop a growing understanding and curiosity about the ocean and how the things we do can affect it. Children will develop key skills such as empathy, curiosity and teamwork as well as obtaining a greater understanding of the world in which we live.

All of the Common Seas activities can help to develop the following ELGs:

- ✓ Listening, attention and understanding
- ✓ Speaking
- ✓ Personal, social and emotional development
- ✓ Managing self
- ✓ Building relationships
- ✓ Gross and fine motor skills
- ✓ Comprehension
- ✓ The natural world
- ✓ Being imaginative and expressive

See the following pages for the specific ELG skills development within each activity. Additional ELGs for each theme of activities have been captured in the overviews below.

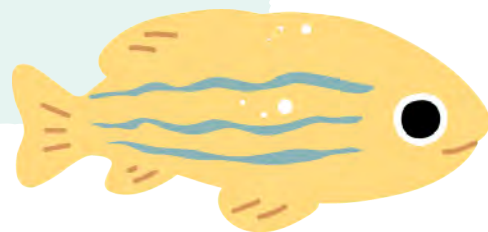
Note: The themed activities are designed to offer progression across activities and ELGs. They can also be used independently and applied to other activities or projects.

Timings have not been allocated, as these will vary by child and by class, but we do not anticipate any introductions or guided discussions to take more than 10 minutes.



Please contact
education@commonseas.com

if you would
like support to
implement these
activities.



Theme 1:

Our wonderful ocean

Activities



Introduction: our blue planet



Ocean commotion role play



Small world water table



How many sea creatures?
Matching activity

Overview

Introduce the ocean and use globes and maps to discover that we live on a blue planet. Children will discover marine habitats and their incredible creatures through storytelling and drama, they will role-play using a water table and small world marine animals.

Learning outcomes

- understand the scale of the ocean and that many different species live there
- Begin to understand how important the ocean is to us and our planet
- Name and describe different marine animals
- Begin to understand that there are different habitats within the ocean
- Participate in discussions using new vocabulary

Additional ELGs

- Expressive arts & design
- Numerical patterns
- Mathematics Number
- Writing

Theme 2:

Our ocean and us

Activities



Introduction: people and the ocean



Learn more with a song:
A sailor went to sea



Small world water table



Sand pit/beach scene role play



Circle time: our ocean and us

Overview

Begin to understand how the ocean is important to our lives, building on learning from Theme 1. Sing a song about the different ways humans interact with the ocean and get creative to bring our interactions with the ocean to life through role play and crafts.

Learning outcomes

- Understand how we use the ocean
- Understand what we gain from the ocean
- Demonstrate understanding of our interaction with the ocean through role-play
- Reflect on why we should look after the ocean

Additional ELGs

- Expressive arts & design
- Understanding the world

Theme 3:

Our ocean needs help

Activities



Introduction- plastic in the ocean



Plastic clean up



Small world water table



Creative promise to help the ocean

Overview

Learn that the things we do can harm or help our ocean. Introduce children to the ways in which litter, particularly plastic, can damage the ocean and the marine life that lives there. Children find out how plastic travels to the ocean and take action to help, in the classroom and their local area.

Learning outcomes

- Understand how plastic can harm the ocean
- Know how to plastic from entering the ocean
- Explore and make observations about the natural world
- Understand my role in helping to protect the natural world
- Be creative and work as a group to complete a project

Additional ELGs

- Expressive arts & design
- Understanding the world
- People, culture and communities

EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Learning objectives

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

Activity themes

Our Wonderful Ocean

Our Ocean and Us

Our Ocean needs help

Listening, Attention and Understanding ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

Speaking ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present, and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓



Learning objectives



PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Activity themes		
	Our Wonderful Ocean	Our Ocean and Us	Our Ocean needs help
Self-Regulation ELG Children at the expected level of development will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly; • Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate; • Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. 	✓	✓	✓
Managing Self ELG Children at the expected level of development will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge; • Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly; • Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet, and understanding the importance of healthy food choices. 	✓	✓	✓
Building Relationships ELG Children at the expected level of development will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others; • Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers; • Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.. 	✓	✓	✓



EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Learning objectives

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Gross Motor Skills ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing

Activity themes

Our Wonderful Ocean	Our Ocean and Us	Our Ocean needs help
---------------------	------------------	----------------------

✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓

Fine Motor Skills ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓



SKILL

Fine Motor Skills ✓

Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.

EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Learning objectives



LITERACY & MATHS	Activity themes		
	Our Wonderful Ocean	Our Ocean and Us	Our Ocean needs help
Comprehension ELG Children at the expected level of development will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; • Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories; • Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play. 	✓	✓	✓
Word Reading ELG Children at the expected level of development will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs; • Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending; • Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words. 	✓	✓	✓
Writing ELG Children at the expected level of development will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed; • Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters; • Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others. 	✓		
Mathematics Number ELG Children at the expected level of development will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a deep understanding of numbers to 10, including the composition of each number; • Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5; • Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) numbers • bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts. 	✓		
Numerical Patterns ELG Children at the expected level of development will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system; • Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity. • Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally. 	✓		

EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Learning objectives

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

Activity themes

Our Wonderful Ocean

Our Ocean and Us

Our Ocean needs help

Past and Present ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling

✓

✓

✓

✓

People Culture and Communities ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts, and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

✓

✓

✓

The Natural World ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓



EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Learning objectives

EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN

Activity themes

Our Wonderful
Ocean

Our Ocean
and Us

Our Ocean
needs help

Creating with Materials ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form, and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

Being Imaginative and Expressive ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs;
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓



SKILL

Being Imaginative and Expressive



Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

Ocean & Plastics learning objectives








Common Seas has worked with partners to create a set of universal Ocean & Plastics Learning Objectives, utilising Ocean Literacy and UNESCO frameworks for education.

COGNITIVE LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Activity themes		
	Our Wonderful Ocean	Our Ocean and Us	Our Ocean needs help
• The learner understands basic marine ecology, ecosystems, and predator-prey relationships	✓	✓	
• The learner understands the connection of people to the sea and the life it holds	✓	✓	
• The learner understands threats to the ocean such as plastic pollution			✓
• The learner is beginning to understand the scope and geographical scale of plastic use and plastic pollution			✓
• The learner is beginning to understand how plastic enters the ocean			✓
• The learner is beginning to understand the different impacts of plastic across its entire life cycle.			✓
SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES			
• The learner can begin to reflect on their own use of plastics, and how this use might affect the marine environment.			✓
• The learner is beginning to understand alternative behaviours and practices that reduce their contribution to plastic pollution.			✓
• The learner can begin to communicate the importance of the ocean and their connection to it	✓	✓	✓
• The learner can begin to communicate some of the environmental impacts of plastic use			✓
• The learner is able to influence the behaviours and practices of others in their community in terms of plastic use and management.			
• The learner can collaborate at a range of scales to campaign for the reduction of plastic pollution.			
BEHAVIOURALL LEARNING OBJECTIVES			
• The learner is able to access waste management systems and knows that some plastics can be recycled			✓
• The learner can help plan and implement campaigns that lead to a reduction in plastic pollution at school			✓
• The learner is able to recall stories they have shared and about the ocean and plastic pollution and talk about them with their peers.	✓	✓	✓
• The learner, with help from an adult, can begin to make informed decisions to reduce plastic pollution.			✓

Resource guidance

The Teacher Guidance for each lesson uses a set of icons as seen below to provide visual clues to support teachers:

LESSON ACTIVITIES

 <p>Explain Explain or introduce new concept using slides or script to support</p>	 <p>Demonstrate/ Observe Children watch a demonstration or video</p>	 <p>Supported activity An activity for children completed with adult support</p>
 <p>Independent activity An activity for children to complete without adult support.</p>	 <p>Group activity An activity for group or whole class participation</p>	 <p>Story time Share a story with book recommendations to support thematic learning</p>
 <p>Talk time Adult guided discussion to consolidate or extend learning for individuals, groups or the whole class.</p>		

SUPPORTING IDEAS AND GUIDANCE

 <p>Guidance Further information on how to run an activity</p>	 <p>Idea Optional ideas to help extend or differentiate an activity</p>	 <p>Information Further information to guide an activity or explanation</p>
 <p>Technical Specific ICT or practical hints and tips</p>	 <p>Health & Safety Guidance for staying safe during specific activities</p>	 <p>Provided resources These resources are included in this book</p>
 <p>Additional resources Extra resources. These will enhance the activities and should be easy to find or source locally at minimal or at no expense.</p>	 <p>Learning outside Optional outdoor provision</p>	





THEME 1

Our wonderful ocean



Introduce the ocean and use globes and maps to discover that we live on a blue planet. Children will discover marine habitats and their incredible creatures through storytelling and drama, they will role-play using a water table and small world marine animals.

ACTIVITIES

-  1. Introduction: our blue planet
-  2. Ocean commotion role play
-  3. Small world water table
-  4. How many sea creatures? Matching activity

Additional ELGs

- ✓ Expressive arts & design
- ✓ Numerical patterns
- ✓ Mathematics Number
- ✓ Writing

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand the scale of the ocean and that many different species live there
- Begin to understand how important the ocean is to us and our planet
- Name and describe different marine animals
- Begin to understand that there are different habitats within the ocean
- Participate in discussions using new vocabulary



THEME 1

Our wonderful ocean



Age 3-5

Resources



Slideshow

Key vocabulary and images for display

Number/marine creature cards



Commotion in the Ocean by Giles Andreae (or other text)

Large blue material or fabric sheet

Small toy marine animals

Large toy/teddy marine animal

Strips of green or brown material or scrap paper or plastic

Map of the World

Water table

Lesson overview

Introduce the marine habitat and encourage discussion on what children already know about the ocean. Children discover that we live on a blue planet and will learn about marine habitats and their incredible variety of life through a variety of supported and independent activities, from story telling and drama, to sorting challenges.

Activities



Introduction: our blue planet



Commotion in the ocean role play



Small world water table



How many sea creatures? Matching activity

Learning outcomes

- Understand the scale of the ocean and that many different species live there
- Begin to understand how important the ocean is to us and our planet
- Name and describe different marine animals
- Begin to understand that there are different habitats within the ocean
- Participate in discussions using new vocabulary

Timings have not been allocated, as these will vary by child and by class, but we do not anticipate any introductions or guided discussions to take more than 10 minutes.



INTRODUCTION:

Our blue planet



Children seated in a circle



This activity is developed further in the introductions for theme 2 and 3



**Slideshow:
Our_wonderful_ocean_EYFS**



Consider the starting points of your children-what personal experience of the ocean-if any-are they likely to have?

Activity guidance & delivery notes



Prepare resources in advance to bring imaginations to life through the scripted story

This is an example script to help introduce the ocean. The children will begin to understand life in the ocean and what it would be like to be a marine animal. The script can be adapted based on the needs and experiences of the group of children and the resources available.

Step

1



Slideshow image 1:
Planet Earth

Can anyone tell us what this big ball is?

That's right, it's our planet, Earth.

Why is it so blue?

Most of our planet is covered in salty water, this is the ocean. The ocean is very important as it is what makes this planet the perfect place for us to live. It makes lots of oxygen in the air that we use to breathe and it helps to keep our planet the right temperature . Let's have a closer look...

2



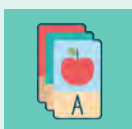
Slideshow image 2:
Waves with sound effect of waves or video of waves in the ocean.

Look at these powerful waves! Shall we dive in and take a look?

Everyone close your eyes tight.

Now imagine you are diving deep into the beautiful blue ocean!

Can you hear the water filling your ears? Can you see any interesting fish swimming around?



Ocean Scene: Using blue material, green and brown strips for seaweed and small sea animals, spread out a marine scene and encourage children to imagine they are under the sea.

INTRODUCTION:

Our blue planet

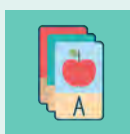
Step

Activity guidance & delivery notes

3



Slideshow image 3:
Under the sea



Introduce your larger marine animal – we've used Turtle Ted, but you can switch this to suit your resources, e.g. Daphne Dolphin.



Pretend Ted is real, making him swim around the ocean scene and nibble on seaweed.

Open your eyes!

Welcome to the ocean! The ocean is huge and home to all kinds of special creatures.

I think I can hear one coming... Oh look, here's Ted!! Say 'Hello, Ted!'

Ted is a pretty amazing creature- does anyone know what animal he is?

That's right he's a sea turtle. A green turtle to be exact. Turtles live in the sea. Even though they live in the water, they breathe air like we do. Thankfully, they can hold their breath underwater for a very long time – in fact, they could hold their breath even longer than the time you'll be at school today!

The sea is very special for Ted as all the things turtles like to eat are in the water. Seaweed is his absolute favourite snack! He is actually feeling pretty hungry right now... can you see any tasty seaweed?

We're going to meet Ted again but for now, we'll leave him to swim around and eat some yummy food. Everyone say, "See you soon, Ted!"

What do you think we're going to be learning about?

Explain that we will be learning about the ocean and how important it is for us and all the creatures who live there and why we need to help to look after it.



Turtle Ted

ACTIVITY 1

Ocean Commotion role play



**Activity
1 Ocean
Commotion
role play**



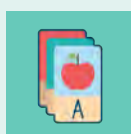
**Commotion
in the Ocean
by Giles
Andreae**



**The activity can
continue on from initial
carpet session or be
delivered with smaller
groups**

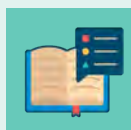
Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

1



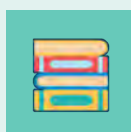
Map or globe

Shall we learn about some of the other animals that live under the sea and what they like to do and eat?



Commotion in the
Ocean by Giles
Andreae

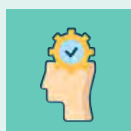
Read the story 'Commotion in the Ocean' by Giles Andreae
Introduce key vocabulary to describe the animals and their habitats
with images to support understanding.



Key vocab (p.23)

Remind children that Earth has one big ocean and the ocean can
be different temperatures in different places. Where do you think
the ocean is cold? Show the different possible habitats on a globe
– warm water shallow coral reefs (like the ones clown fish and angel
fish live in) are where the ocean is warm and ice caps where the
ocean is cold. Return to the book and show a selection of animals
from the story.

Role play: pretend to be the animals in the story



Parts of the story
can be read at
a time to avoid
prolonged carpet
time. If this text
isn't available,
choose another
ocean themed
story!



Key questions:

What animal will you be? How will you move your body in the
ocean?

What can you hear? What can you touch?

How does it make you feel swimming in the ocean?

Hide in the coral or sea grass – why might an animal do this?

Do you need to come up for air? Can you describe your animal to a
partner using the key vocabulary? See if your partner can guess
what animal you are!

Extra Activity



Optional
Independent
follow-on activity

The ocean is a fascinating place full of amazing creatures.
What was your favourite animal?

Can you describe what they look like using the key vocabulary?

Have a go at drawing your favourite marine animal. What colours
do you need? Does it have flippers/fins/gills/blowhole?

Can you add anything to show where it might live?

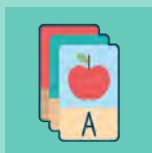
Use phonics knowledge to write down words to describe the
marine animal.

ACTIVITY 2

Activity 2 Water table mini-world play



Great activity for outside learning



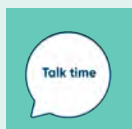
Water table and small toy marine animals



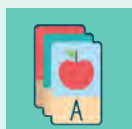
This activity is developed further in theme 2 and 3.

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

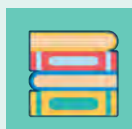
1



Optional talk time extension and assessment activity



Map or globe



Key vocab



Set up a water table with small marine animals for free play and exploration of the learning theme.

Encourage the children to role play with the animals.



Key questions:

Can you create stories about what the creatures might get up to during the day? How do the different creatures interact with each other?

Would they all live in the same place?

What if one animal was in the wrong part of the ocean?

Extension/assessment

Have vocabulary cards on display and a globe or map to hand to discuss where we might find different habitats and to show that the ocean is connected as one.

Key questions

Why do you think they like to live there?

Can all of the animals live in every ocean in the world?

Encourage children to think about oceans being different temperatures – different marine life need different conditions to survive.

Why do Angel fish live in warm water corals?

Explain that they need warmer waters and they eat the sponges that grow in the corals. Animals have different features to help them survive where they live.

Why can polar bears live in the Arctic Ocean but not Angel fish?

This activity will be adapted as the sessions and objectives change.

ACTIVITY 3

How many marine animals? Maths matching game



Adult support for individual or small group work



**Printable resource (p.25):
'How many marine animals?'
matching cards**

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

1



Optional Independent
follow-on activity



Introduce the game by talking about the animals on the card.



Key questions:

What is this marine animal?
Describe what they look like using key vocabulary.
Where do they live?
What do they like to eat?

Matching game: match the number (up to 10) on a card to the number of marine animals on another. Encourage children to subitise the number of animals on the card before counting.



Key questions:

How many can you see?
Looking at the number, can you show me that number on your fingers?
If they don't match, which number is greater?
How many more/less animals will we need for them to match?

Once finished, the children can count the number of creatures they have collected in total.

Optional independent activity:

Children can make their own matching cards using numbers and marine animals of their choosing.

ACTIVITY 3

How many marine animals? Maths matching game

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

2



Extra activities:



Create a small world play station with blue material as the ocean and the sea creatures for children to explore. Create habitats such as a coral reef, polar, sea grass, caves. This can be adapted throughout the different themes of the sessions.



Mark making activity with an under the sea theme. Use scrap paper, chalk or marks in sand to explore the patterns of marine animals, or of the ocean habitat.

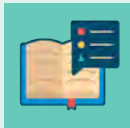


Jellyfish cutting – Use scrap paper or other junk modeling to cut thin strips for jellyfish tentacles.



Create an ocean in a bottle (repurposed plastic bottle). Fill the base with sand, then cut out fish from old crisp packets and other recycled plastic. Place in the bottle and fill with water – you can add blue food colouring to the water.

3



Suggested Reading:

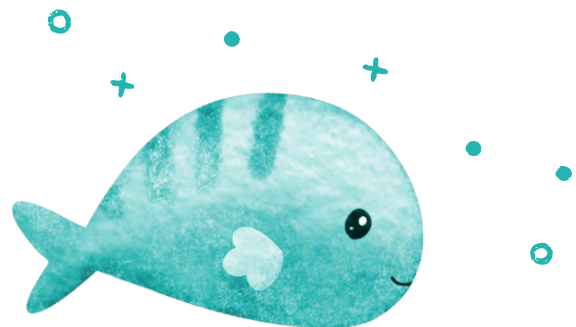
The Snail and the Whale by Julia Donaldson

The Sea Below my Toes by Charlotte Guillain

Seas: a lift-the-flap eco book by Carmen Saldana

The wide, wide sea by Anna Wilson and Jenny Lovlie

Hooray for fish by Lucy Cousins



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Key vocabulary



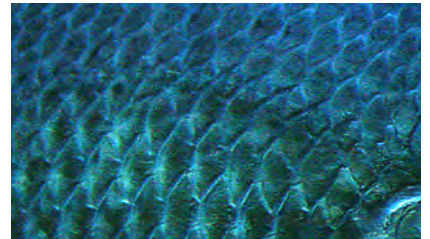
fins



tentacles



scales



teeth



beak



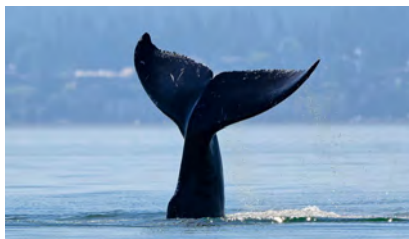
shell



flipper



tail



coral reef



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Key vocabulary print out or display



ice cap



cold



warm



marine habitat





ACTIVITY 3

How many marine animals? Maths matching game



CARD SET 1

1

2

ACTIVITY 3

How many marine animals? Maths matching game

3

4

5

6

ACTIVITY 3

How many marine animals? Maths matching game

7

8

9

10

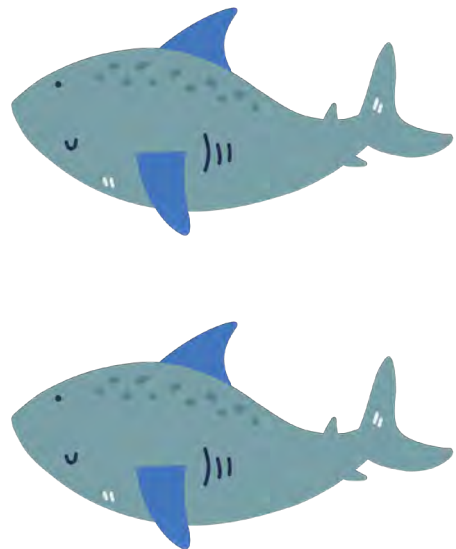
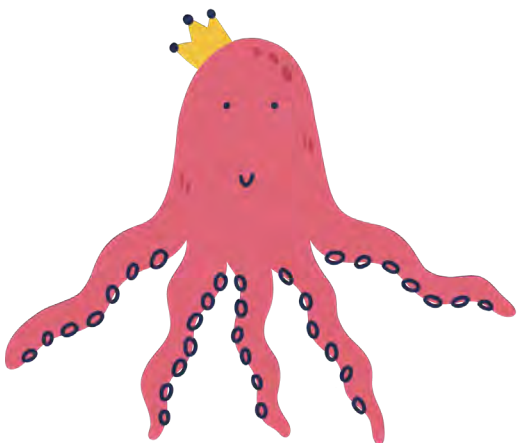


ACTIVITY 3

How many marine animals? Maths matching game

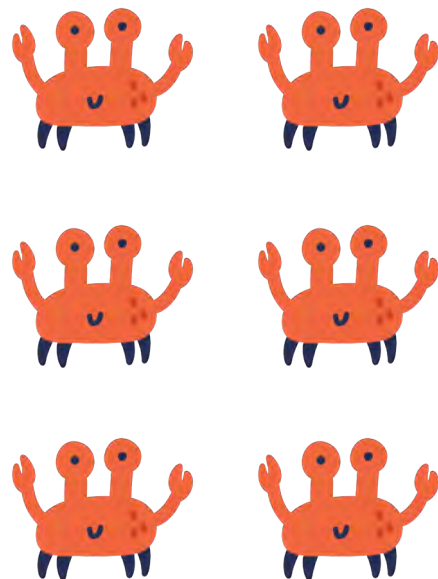
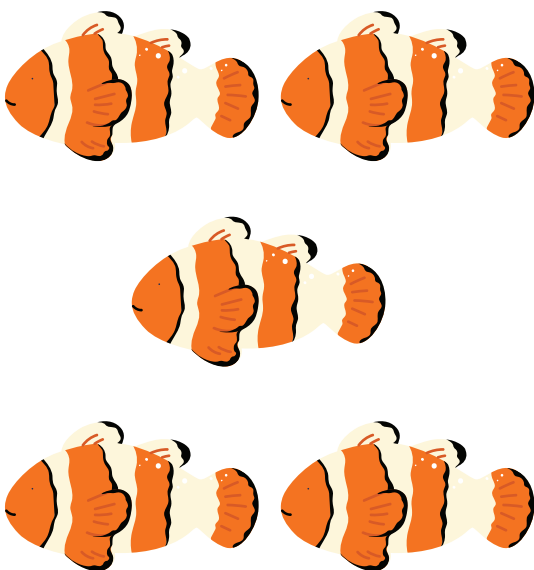
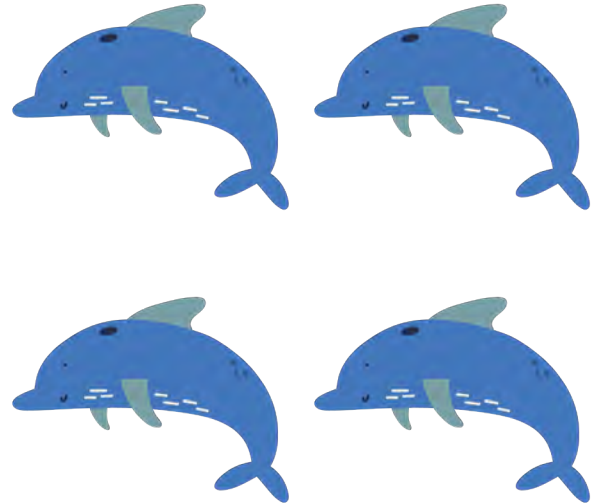
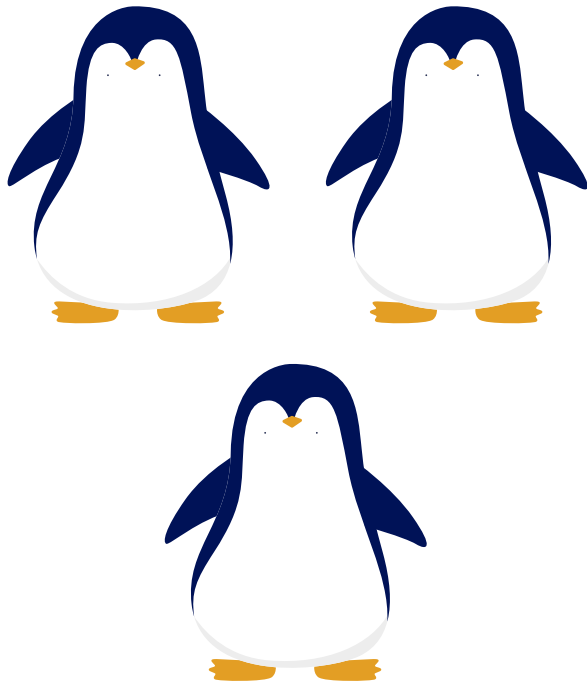


CARD SET 2



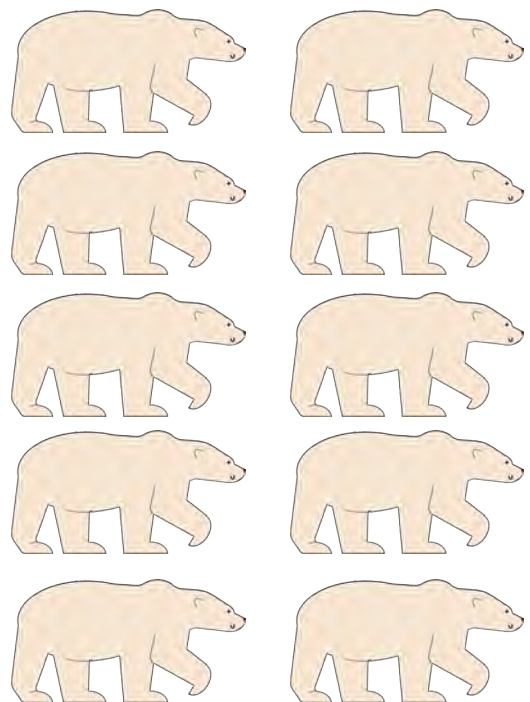
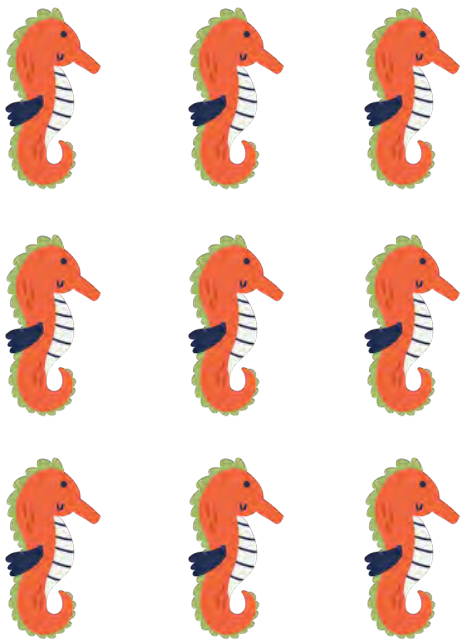
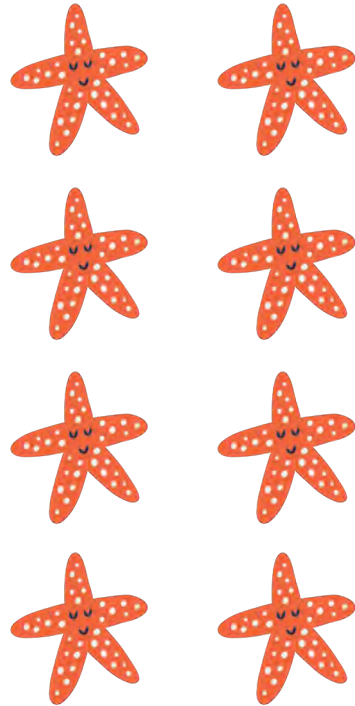
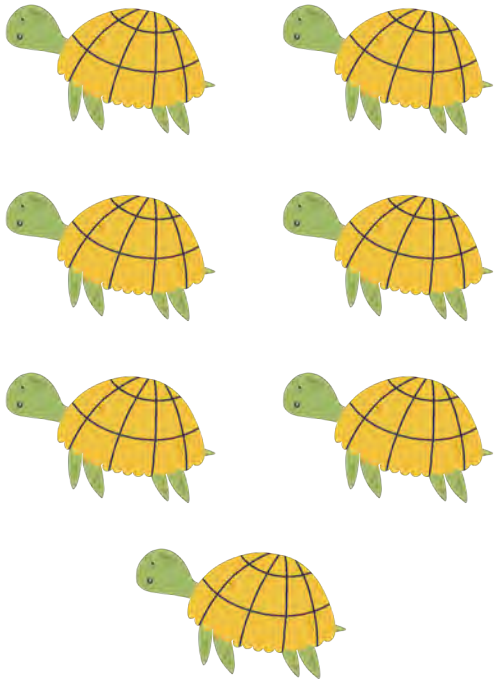
ACTIVITY 3

How many marine animals? Maths matching game



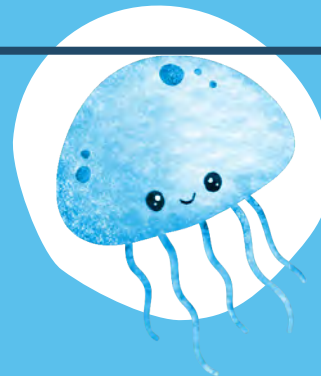
ACTIVITY 3

How many marine animals? Maths matching game








THEME 2

Our ocean and us



Begin to understand how the ocean is important to our lives, building on learning from Theme 1. Sing a song about the different ways humans interact with the ocean and get creative to bring our connection to the ocean to life through role play and crafts.

ACTIVITIES

-  1. Introduction—people and the ocean
-  2. Learn more with a song:
A sailor went to sea
-  3. Small world water table
-  4. Sand pit/beach scene role play
-  5. Circle time: What we know and love about the ocean

Additional ELGs

- ✓ Expressive arts & design
- ✓ Understanding the world

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand how we use the ocean
- Understand what we gain from the ocean
- Demonstrate understanding of our interaction with the ocean through role play
- Reflect on why we should look after the ocean



THEME 2

Our ocean and us



Age 3–5

Resources



Slideshow: Our_Ocean_and_us_EYFS

Key vocabulary and images for display



Small toy marine animals

Junk modelling equipment

Toy boats & people (e.g. dolls or action figure) – pictures could be used instead

Sand pit

Water table

Small world shop items

Lesson overview

Begin to understand how the ocean is important to our lives, building on learning from Theme 1. Sing a song about the different ways humans interact with the ocean and get creative to bring our interactions with the ocean to life through role play and crafts.

Activities



Introduction–people and the ocean



Learn more with a song:
A sailor went to sea



Small world water table



Sand pit/beach scene role play



Circle time: What we know and love about the ocean

Learning outcomes

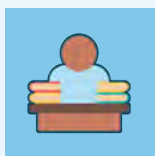
- Understand how we use the ocean
- Understand what we gain from the ocean
- Demonstrate understanding of our interaction with the ocean through role-play
- Reflect on why we should look after the ocean

Timings have not been allocated, as these will vary by child and by class, but we do not anticipate any introductions or guided discussions to take more than 10 minutes.

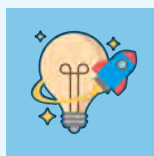


INTRODUCTION:

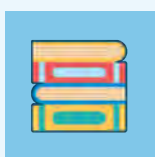
Our Ocean and us



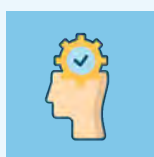
Carpet time



This activity is a continuation from theme 1 and extended in theme 3, but can also be used independently



Slideshow: Our_Ocean_and_us_EYFS



Consider the starting points of your children- what personal experience of the ocean are they likely to have?

Activity guidance & delivery notes

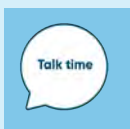


Prepare resources in advance to bring imagination to life through the scripted story

The following script can be used to begin a discussion about how humans interact with the ocean. The children will continue to develop their understanding of the ocean and how important it is to all of us. The script can be adapted based on the needs and experiences of the group of children and the resources available

Step

1



Talk time – recap previous learning

We've been learning about some amazing animals that live in the ocean and how different animals live in different places called habitats.

The ocean has different habitats.



Slideshow Image 1: Under the sea image with turtles and other marine creatures.

Can we remember any of the animals we spoke about and where they lived? Why do they live in different habitats?

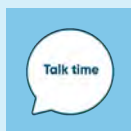
Who remembers Ted?

Bring back Ted the Turtle – where would we find Ted?

What does he like to eat?

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

2



Talk time – guided discussion



Slideshow Image 2-5
Images of how people use and rely on the ocean, including fishing, shipping, diving, exploring, leisure, food

Introduce a person to the ocean (this could be a small doll or action figure type toy).

Why do people need the ocean?

Responses may include: We play in the sea when we go to the beach; we eat fish from the sea; we go on boats; we travel, people's jobs etc.

Some children may not have many ideas depending on their own experiences of the ocean.

Share slides 2-5 of people interacting with the ocean. Discuss what is happening in each picture and how they may connect to the children's own lives. e.g. Do they have family by the sea? Have they had a holiday or a trip to the seaside? Do they enjoy eating seafood? Have they had a parcel delivered from overseas?



Extension – can you introduce energy creation (oil, wind, wave power) or talk about how the ocean impacts the weather?

3



This song should have a familiar tune!



Further verses could also be added based on the feedback the children gave on how they would use the ocean.

As a group, sing the song 'a sailor went to sea, sea, sea' with the adapted lyrics. Encourage the children to use actions to show what the different people in the song might be doing.

'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea to see what he could see, see, see,

And all that he could see, see, see was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.'

'A fisherman went to sea, sea, sea to see what he could hook, hook, hook

And all that he could hook, hook, hook was a small fish he could cook, cook, cook.'

'A family went to sea, sea, sea to have fun on the beach, beach, beach,

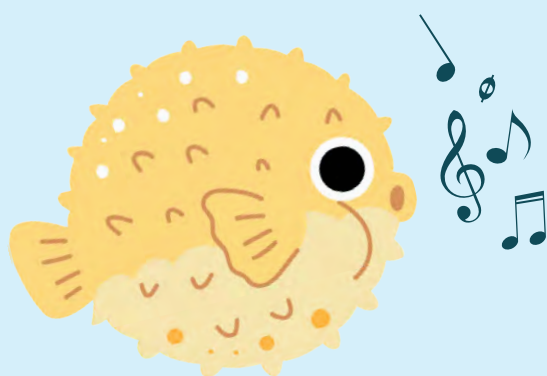
And sitting on the beach, beach, beach, they made a sandcastle each, each, each.'

'A big ship went to sea, sea, sea to get things to you and me, me, me,

I wonder what we'll see, see, see when the big ship arrives near me, me, me.'

'A diver went to sea, sea, sea to go under the waves and swim, swim, swim,

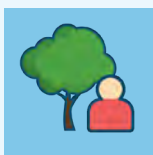
And while on they were on their swim, swim, swim they saw a great....big....FIN, FIN, FIN.'



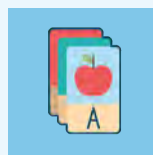


ACTIVITY 1

Seaside role play



**Great activity for
outside learning**



**Sandpit and
small world shop
equipment**

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

1



The seaside shop goods could be made by the children with junk modelling if these toys are not available.

In a sand pit, create a beach scene. Have access to buckets and spades for sandcastles, sand sieves, other sand toys.

Set up a role-play area nearby where the children can make/buy/sell ice creams and snacks for people on the beach.



Key questions:

What makes the beach so fun?

What do you like doing in the sand?

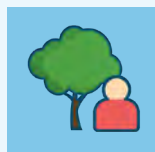
Oh look, you've bought an ice-cream! What will you do with your rubbish?

What do other people on the beach do with their rubbish when they go home?

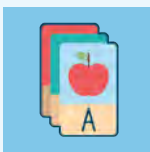
What happens if they leave rubbish on the beach?

ACTIVITY 2

Water table mini-world play



**Great activity for
outside learning**



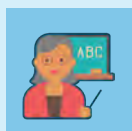
**Water table and
small toy marine
animals, figurines
and boats**



**This activity is
started in theme
1 and developed
further in theme 3.**

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

1



Optional guided activity

Adapt the water table from the previous activity to include people, boats and other examples of human activities. Children can use the small world characters to independently play and create stories and scenarios to show how we interact and use the ocean.



Key questions:

What are those boats delivering?

How many fish will the fishermen catch?

What are the people on these boats doing?

How do the marine animals we have been learning about feel about boats?

Begin to introduce questions to encourage deeper thought around the oceans such as:

What if the fishermen catch too many fish?



Investigate!

Work together to make boats from different materials and test if they will float or sink while at the water table. The boats could be made from repurposed materials such as an old yoghurt pot or plastic bottle, from scrap paper, or from found objects.

What will your boat be used for?

Why did/ didn't the boat float?

How can you change your design?

What is the best shape/ material for a boat to float?



ACTIVITY 3

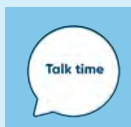
Circle Time: Our ocean and us



Use turtle Ted, or another marine animal, to pass around the group so that children know when it is their turn to listen or share.

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

1



Guided discussion to assess and consolidate learning

Reflect what we have learnt about the ocean so far. Children take turns to share something they know or love about the ocean.

What are your favourite marine animals?

Can you describe them?

If you were a sea creature, what habitat would you like to live in and why?

Why is the ocean important/special to us?

What activity would you like to do on the ocean the most?

Do you think people should help to look after the ocean? Why?

2



Extra activities



Create a diorama in an old shoe box – use re-purposed materials or modeling clay to add marine animals, people, boats and more!



Ocean sounds activity – play different sounds of the ocean: waves, animals, boats, playing on a beach. What do you hear? Describe the sounds – some children can begin to try sounding out descriptive words or you could use different instruments to try and recreate the sounds or patterns you hear.

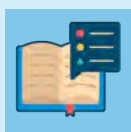


Colour in, draw pictures or make models around the theme of our oceans and us.



Counting activities – how many boats are on the water? How many people are on the beach? What if I remove 1 or add one more?

3



Suggested reading

Dougal's Deep-Sea Diary by Simon Bartrum

Brilliant Boats by Tony Mitton & Ant Parker

Lucy & Tom at the Seaside by Shirley Hughes

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Key vocabulary



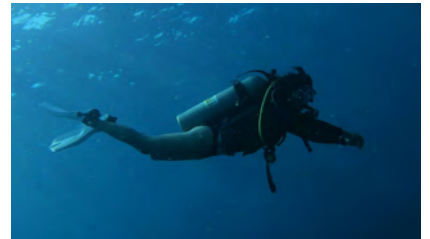
fishing



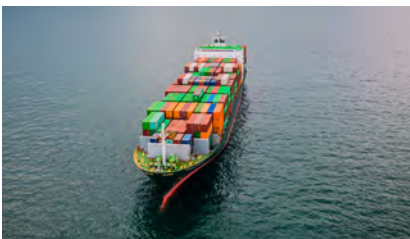
leisure



diving



shipping



seaside



beach

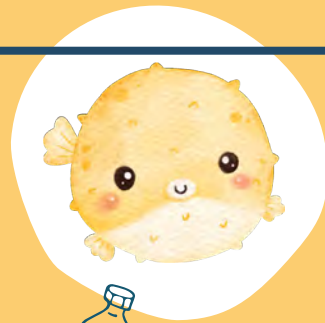


seafood



THEME 3

Our ocean needs help



Learn that the things we do can harm or help our ocean. Introduce children to the ways in which litter, particularly plastic, can damage the ocean and the marine life that lives there. Children find out how plastic travels to the ocean and take action to help, in the classroom and their local area.

ACTIVITIES



1. Introduction- plastic in the ocean



2. Plastic Clean-up (options for inside or outside the classroom)



3. Small world water table



4. Creative promise to help the ocean

Additional ELGs

- ✓ Expressive arts & design
- ✓ Understanding the world
- ✓ People, culture and communities

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand how plastic can harm the ocean
- Know how to prevent plastic from entering the ocean
- Explore and make observations about the natural world
- Understand my role in helping to protect the natural world
- Be creative and work as a group to complete a project



THEME 3

Our ocean needs help



Age 3-5

Resources



Key vocabulary and images for display

Image of 50 year old crisp packet

Example image: hand print marine animals



Blue material

Toy marine animals

Turtle

Clean pieces of plastic and litter

Litter pickers or gloves

Water table

Small nets

Large sheet of paper

Arts and crafts materials

Lesson overview

Learn that the things we do can harm or help our ocean. Introduce children to the ways in which litter, particularly plastic, can damage the ocean and the marine life that lives there. Children find out how plastic travels to the ocean and take action to help, in the classroom and their local area.

Activities



Introduction- Plastic in the ocean



Plastic Clean-up (options for inside or outside the classroom)



Small world water table



Creative pledge to help the ocean

Learning outcomes

- Understand how plastic can harm the ocean
- Know how to prevent plastic from entering the ocean
- Explore and make observations about the natural world
- Understand my role in helping to protect the natural world
- Be creative and work as a group to complete a project

Timings have not been allocated, as these will vary by child and by class, but we do not anticipate any introductions or guided discussions to take more than 10 minutes.



INTRODUCTION:

Plastic in the ocean



Children seated in a circle



This activity started in theme 1 and 2, with extended learning in theme 3.



Consider the starting points of your children- what personal experience of the ocean are they likely to have?

Activity guidance & delivery notes



Prepare resources in advance to bring imagination to life through the scripted story

The following script can be used to begin a discussion about how rubbish in the ocean affects the creatures that live there. The children will continue to develop an understanding of how our actions can affect the marine animals they have been learning about. They will have the opportunity to show empathy and understanding of what it would be like living in an environment full of rubbish.

The script can be adapted based on the needs and experiences of the group of children and the resources available

Step

1



Talk time – recap previous learning

What we have spoken about so far?

Recap the amazing ocean animals and habitats and how humans use the ocean in different ways.



Re-create the ocean scene with Ted the turtle on the carpet from theme 1 (Our wonderful ocean) intro – you can use another marine character if you need to

Let's go back to Ted's habitat- close your eyes and imagine you are diving deep underwater. What can you see? What can you hear? How does it feel?

Open your eyes! Hi Turtle Ted!
Do you think Ted is hungry?



Get everyone involved in making the storm, building up the energy and adding sounds and motions

Shall we let him have a snack?

Who can remember what he likes to eat?

Uh-oh, I hear a storm coming, can you hear the rain?
• Everyone tap their fingers on the ground for rain.

Can you hear the wind?
• Everyone make a whooshing sound.

The waves are getting bigger now too!
• Everyone add in some wave motions using their body movements



Step

Activity guidance & delivery notes



Ask the children to close their eyes and talk them through the actions to calm the storm (quieter, slower etc.). Whilst their eyes are closed, scatter an assortment of litter (e.g. crisp packets, plastic bags, bottles, paper, wood) on the ocean scene.

The storm is over now; open your eyes.

Talk time

Key questions:

What's happened?

Ted's home looks a bit different now.

What is all of this stuff and where has it all come from?

Discuss that lots of rubbish has been brought in by the storm.

Would you like it if your home was covered in litter? What about the park or playground?

What type of litter can you see? Do you know what it is made from?

This piece is plastic.

Talk time

Key questions:

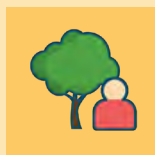
Plastic is a pretty amazing material because it can be used for so many things – point out different things in the setting made from plastic.

It can last for a really long time – this is great when we need it to last, like our chairs in the classroom! But it can cause problems for animals like Ted if it gets into their habitat. We'll find out more about this later...

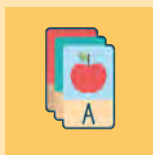
What do you do with your rubbish when you've finished a snack?

ACTIVITY 1

Plastic Clean-up



Great activity for learning outside



Litter pickers or gloves



Ensure you have the right equipment and enough adult supervisors if you are going offsite

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

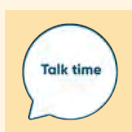
1



Before the litter pick, discuss how to stay safe
– no picking up litter with bare hands, use gloves or the grabbers, don't pick up anything sharp, children should be in small groups with an adult present to supervise.

Using a litter picker or gloves, model picking up the plastic in the ocean scene and put it into a box.

Explain that, just like we saw with the storm, litter from inland- even where you live- can sometimes end up in the ocean and we need to try our best to keep that from happening.



Guided discussion to extend learning

Arrange for the children to go on a litter pick around the school playground or in a local green space.

What types of litter can they find?

Where did they come from?



If you can't go offsite for this activity, use lunch or snack time litter in your learning space or sandpit for the children to clean up.

Are any of the items things that they might use at home or at school?

Extension

Using the clean plastic collected from the ocean scene, the plastic can be sorted to decide what could have been done to stop it becoming litter.

Introduce

'Reduce' (use less – e.g. instead of single-use bottle, bring a refillable bottle to schools)

'Reuse' (use it again e.g. single use bottle can be made into a bird feeder)

'Recycle' (use the material to make something else – e.g. plastic bottle could be recycled into a shopping bag)

What is the best thing we can do to stop plastic litter? (answer: Reduce)



ACTIVITY 2

Water table mini-world play



Great activity for outside learning



Water table, small toy marine animals, clean plastic litter



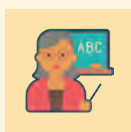
This activity builds on activities in theme 1 and 2

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

1



Place a clear plastic pen lid into the water, this will be invisible once it is submerged – can anyone find the pen lid?



Optional extension – guided investigation



Image of 50 year old crisp packet



Adapt the water table activity to now include small bits of plastic that have been cut up. The children can now adapt the role play with the small marine animals to include what it is like for them in the ocean filled with plastic. Some sea creatures could be wrapped in pieces of plastic for the children to unwrap and save.

Make the plastic different shapes and sizes and include fruit nets, snack wrappers and other familiar waste items.

The children can go through the water table with small nets and try to remove the plastic.



Key questions:

What would it be like for all of the marine animals that live here now?

Some of the pieces of plastic are tiny – we call them microplastics – what might the animals do with those?

What if the fisherman catches a fish that has eaten microplastics?

Some of these pieces have holes in – what problem could this cause?

Could any of these plastic things be mistaken for something else, like seaweed or jellyfish?

Adult-led activity while groups are at the water table:

This activity is designed to develop a deeper understanding of the difference between plastic waste and other waste and why we are trying to stop plastic from entering the water system. Fish out an empty crisp packet.



ACTIVITY 2

Water table mini-world play

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

Look at this! Who has had a packet of crisps like this before?

Do you think Ted would like this?

How long do you think this could travel around the ocean for? A few days? Weeks? Months?

Display a picture of the crisp packet from the 1960's, found on a beach recently.

Tell the children that this crisp packet is older than their parents/teacher/carer (choose an appropriate adult) and was found on a beach in Cornwall. It has been in the sea for all those years and still looks like a crisp packet.

Do we want our crisp packets to end up in the ocean and float around forever?

Ask the children to put the crisp packet into a jug of water. In another jug, place a piece of old newspaper.

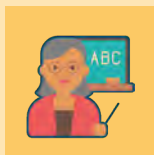
What do you think will happen to the crisp packet if we check it in an hour/at the end of the day/tomorrow?

What do you think the newspaper will look like in an hour/at the end of the day/tomorrow?

Check the two different materials and ask the children to describe what they look or feel like. Remind them that the crisp packet is plastic.

ACTIVITY 3

Creative promise to help the ocean



Adult support for individual or small group work



Example sheet: Handprint marine animals

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

1



Prepare resources in advance – do you have space for a new classroom display? If not, how about a poster?

Prepare the heading 'Our Amazing Ocean, We Promise To Protect It' and create a whole class ocean mural or collage for display.

Ask children for ideas about actions they can take e.g. I will take my rubbish home with me; I will pick up litter on my school playground; I will use a reusable water bottle; I will put my snack in a reusable pot; I will use scrap paper when I want to draw something; I will recycle things I can't use again.

Add these responses to the display.

You can also focus on what is great about the ocean – include the children's favourite marine animals, different habitats, beaches etc. Children can add images from home or draw pictures to make it more personal.

Note: When creating your display, use recycled or repurposed materials where possible e.g. crisp packets, bottle tops, cut up plastic bags, scrap paper, newspaper, magazines etc.

2



Handprint marine life:

Make colourful handprints and decorate them to look like marine life (fish, jellyfish and octopus work well for this- but we'd love to see any other ideas you create!).

The children can choose an action from those already listed on the display, and add their handprint marine animal as their 'signature' for their pledge to help the ocean.

Could your setting or school become Plastic Clever? Find out more on page 49.

ACTIVITY 3

Creative promise to help the ocean

Step Activity guidance & delivery notes

3



Extra activities



Fill a sandpit with small pieces of plastic (this could be pom-poms, cut up pieces of plastic, pieces of thread or wool etc). The children pick them out using tweezers



Science investigation using different materials where the children put items such as plastic, paper, clay etc. into water and record their findings by taking pictures and describing how the material has changed after being in the water over time.

4



Suggested reading

Somebody Swallowed Stanley by Sarah Roberts

Clean Up! by Nathan Bryon

The Wide, Wide Sea by Anna Wilson

The Odd Fish by Naomi and James Jones

Stella and the Seagull by Georgina Stevens & Izzy Burton

KEY VOCABULARY

- ✓ Plastic
- ✓ Reuse
- ✓ Recycle
- ✓ Rubbish/litter
- ✓ Reduce

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Key vocabulary



plastic



litter



reduce



reuse



recycle





ABOUT

Plastic Clever Schools

Have you enjoyed learning about our incredible ocean and how to help protect it from plastic pollution? Don't stop now- you can become a Plastic Clever School!

Common Seas and Kids Against Plastic teamed up to bring schools and students together, sharing their successes and building a global community committed to reducing plastic waste.

Plastic Clever Schools works through three stages:

Inspire: Learn about plastic pollution and inspire others to take action.

Investigate: Identify problem plastics in school and prepare to eliminate them.

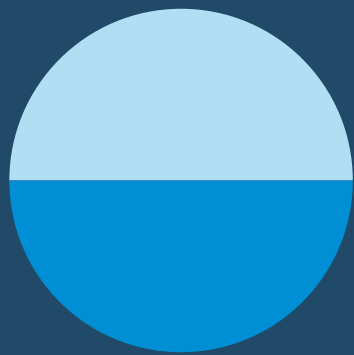
Act: Take action to wave goodbye to single-use plastics.



Common
Seas

+

KIDS
against
PLASTIC



Common
Seas