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# OCEAN WEEK PLANNING

An Ocean Week or Ocean Month is a celebration of our marine environment. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents work together to transform an entire school into a laboratory for the discovery and exploration of the ocean. Ocean Week/Month creates a schoolwide exciting and inclusive atmosphere, and serves as the centerpiece of yearlong ocean studies. During the event, classroom walls and floors disappear under 3-D tidepools and kelp forests; whales and giant squid dangle from hallway ceilings; textbooks give way to real experiences, posters, bones, puppets, library books, and sand from all over the world. Across the curriculum, teachers typically devote 80%–100% of their instructional time to ocean topics. Students take field trips to beaches, creeks, and aquarium stores; and they meet expert guest speakers. Most importantly, everyone at the school works together, sharing skills and resources, and teaching each other about the importance of the ocean to all life on earth.

## **GOALS**

- To blend rigorous scientific literacy with cooperative and interdisciplinary learning
- To demonstrate and experience the most powerful and positive learning environment possible
- To inspire the vision and imagination of every participant
- To build inclusion and to remove barriers that separate special populations of students
- To provide a focused opportunity for teachers to collaborate within and across grade levels, and to integrate subject areas
- To use science as a vehicle to promote language development and acquisition.

## **BACKGROUND**

This guide provides a chronology for organizing an Ocean Week or Month, step-by-step, from inspiration to evaluation. You are encouraged, as the “Ocean Week Cook,” to prepare an educationally balanced feast for all to enjoy. Ocean Week has looked different in each of the hundreds of MARE schools that celebrate the event each year. Your week will, no doubt, be unique, and you will encounter many creative ideas and problems to solve. We hope the following will help you use your time efficiently to undertake what we have found to be a well-balanced and delectable learning experience.

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## THE RECIPE

### PREPARATION TIME

Ten months for best results, with the first four months spent on sparse but crucial preliminary planning

### NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED

Unlimited quantities can be educated using these ingredients

### ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

1. The participation of your school's entire faculty, administration, parent group, and student body
2. The MARE Teacher's Guides to ocean habitats from the Lawrence Hall of Science
3. A large dollop of enthusiasm

### ADDITIONAL INGREDIENTS

The flavor can be vastly increased with the inclusion of each of these ingredients:

- a kick-off assembly
- outreach programs
- guest speakers
- field trips
- MARE staff involvement
- student peer teaching
- schoolwide projects
- parent participation
- fundraising
- media
- culminating assembly
- debriefing/assessment

### PREPARATION

#### I. Two to Ten Months in Advance

##### A. Define Goals

What is your objective and purpose for putting on an Ocean Week? If you keep "Why" in mind, the "How" will follow as a matter of course. If you work specifically toward what is most important to you, your commitment will come easily, and will be communicated clearly to others.

##### B. Plan

1. Set and publish dates as early as possible
2. Scope and scale—How big will it be?

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C. Establish Committees to Work on Various Aspects of the Event (See Ocean Week Brainstorming, which follows, for more suggestions)

1. guest speakers and outreach programs
2. fundraising
3. parent involvement
4. field trips
5. purchasing special supplies (fish, squid, paint)
6. special events (parades, fairs, contests)

D. Cultivate support

- a. promote school **and** district administrator involvement
- b. hold parent involvement kick-off event
- c. send letters out to every parent explaining the program, and asking for volunteers, shell collections, cools, sand samples, slide shows, and speakers

E. Fundraising

1. Apply for grant money (local foundations)
2. Plan fundraising events
3. Approach local businesses for donations of money or supplies
4. Identify existing site funds (SIP, Eisenhower funds, Chapter I, Title VII) that can be used for speakers, media center, field trips, materials, assemblies

F. Schedule assembly and outreach programs, speakers, field trip sites and busses—start early since many groups need to be booked well in advance

G. Contact MARE if you would like our staff to team teach, assist, or coach your teachers during Ocean Week. Call (510) 642-5008.

II. One to Three Months in Advance

A. Check Progress of All Committees biweekly or monthly

B. Plan For Your Grade Level

1. Common goals for the entire grade level
2. Station Rotations: every teacher chooses one MARE activity to present several times (that was each teacher only has one preparation to make); students rotate from teacher to teacher and experience all activities
3. Special projects that the grade level can work on and present to the rest of the school.

C. Plan For Your Class

1. Activities, projects, field trips
2. Speakers or parents coming to work with your class
3. Literature, writing, social studies, art and math connections to your habitat

D. Plan Schoolwide Projects

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## 1. Kick-Off and Culminating Assemblies

- a. Kick-Off Assemblies bring the whole school together to remind students of the purpose and special nature of the week (See the Ocean Week Brainstorming that follows for more suggestions)
- b. Culminating Assemblies celebrate the hard work completed during the week

## 2. Special Extras

Do you want anything with an Ocean Week logo to make or sell? These items build school unity and can even be used as a fund-raiser

- a. posters
- b. t-shirts or baseball caps
- c. mugs
- d. pens
- e. pins

## 3. Ocean Week Faire

Each class displays a project representing its habitat

## 4. Habitat Parade

- a. each class builds a habitat to be viewed during the parade
- b. at a scheduled time classes walk through each room to learn about various habitats
- c. passports can be made in advance and stamped with a picture of an appropriate creature from that habitat

5. Giant Ocean Mural or specialty habitat murals on a wall or playground, contributed to by each class or grade

6. Calamare Festival: Each class dissects squid with help from older students and cooks recipes from around the world.

7. Beach Party: Go to a real beach or get sand and create one at school.

## E. Solicit Donations from local merchants

1. Materials for projects
2. Art supplies for signs/banners
3. T-shirts
4. Prizes for student projects
5. Food snacks for schoolwide assemblies and Ocean Week faire or beach party
6. Fish, squid, shellfish for dissections, fish printing
7. PA system, music system for schoolwide assembly

## F. Keep Calling

Speakers, field trip sites and volunteers need to be contacted and prepped regularly

G. Throw a fund-raiser bake sale, car wash, recycle-a-thon

H. Send follow-up letter to parents reminding them of how they can help (be sure the letter is translated in all necessary languages).

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I. Discuss with teachers of special populations the possibilities of mainstreaming and coaching their students through all Ocean Week activities when possible.

J. Designate a logistics coordinator

If possible have a staff member without a traditional classroom available for last minute logistics during the week. Resource teachers are ideal.

Some of the responsibilities might be:

1. Materials management (e.g. audiovisual equipment, activity kits)
2. Coordinate speakers
3. Greeting visitors
4. Coordinate volunteers

K. Prioritize

1. Do you need to give up on some ideas that haven't come together yet?

2. **Delegate** responsibilities

III. Two Weeks to One Month in Advance

A. Start students working on special projects

1. Get them excited and motivated
2. In addition to big class projects, individuals and small groups can also display their work in a special Small Projects Gallery

B. Contact Media – poll parents for connections to media contacts – Send out:

1. Press releases to newspapers.
  - a. prepare one to give to press before Ocean Week
  - b. prepare a packet to give to press during Ocean Week

Include:

- any articles about your school and the program
- statement of philosophical purpose
- list of VIPs in attendance (speakers, guests)
- schedule of events
- list of stations and activities

2. For the Ambitious

A feature length article or interviews on local radio shows, for yourself and/or students

- If you want coverage, call your local TV newsrooms and local papers and tell them what you are doing. It adds a great deal of excitement to have reporters with cameras and microphones running around during an Ocean Week.

C. Send Invitations

1. Send letters to parents, teachers, principals, administrators, school board members, and community leaders inviting them to visit the school during Ocean Week
2. Highlight the purpose and excitement of the event
3. Include the schedule of events that was sent to media contacts

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D. Plan logistics of mainstreaming special populations into all Ocean Week activities when possible.

E. Brief logistics coordinator on anticipated responsibilities.

F. Delegate as much work as you can to parents/volunteers

IV. One Week in Advance (right up to Ocean Week)

A. Develop Finalized Schedule

1. Individual class schedules
2. Total school schedule

B. Create Evaluation Forms

Feedback is important to give and to get from teachers, parents and students.

C. Maintain Flexibility—The Key to Success

1. Keep school schedule flexible
  - a. allot appropriate time for each aspect of each activity—don't squeeze too much in! Allow time for debriefing between activities and events.
  - b. keep recess and bell schedule flexible (better yet, turn off the bells!)
2. Be prepared for the unexpected: rain, vandalism, cancellations. Have alternatives handy

## **PRESENTATION**

V. OCEAN WEEK

A. Opening Day Logistics

1. Signs and banners go up
2. Welcome everyone, pass out schedules
3. Opening ceremony and Kick-Off Assembly
4. Special presentations
5. Re-confirm with teachers of special populations their plans for mainstreaming students and classroom support

B. Mid-week Logistics

1. Special activities
2. Field trips
3. Outreach programs
4. Grade Level Station Rotations
5. Workshop/parent's night for adults

C. Final Day Logistics

1. Set up Ocean Week Fair, Habitat Parade, Party, etc. with special projects from each class showcased
2. Make space for each class to set up its own activity station
3. Welcome everyone arriving
4. Culminating Assembly, closing ceremony and thank yous

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5. Kids go from station to station, teaching and learning from their peers
  6. Clean up
  7. Consider an adults only celebration for all the hard work.

## **CLEAN UP**

### VI. One-Two Weeks After Ocean Week

A. The day after: Sleep late, you deserve it!

#### B. Assess Your Ocean Week

1. Pass Out evaluation forms to parents, teachers and students
2. Collect and review evaluations
3. Debrief With Students
4. Have a staff debriefing, and take notes for next year about:
  - a. what worked and what didn't
  - b. what ideas people have for next year
  - c. ways to make the event smoother, easier
  - d. how field trips went—timing, location
  - e. which speakers are worth inviting back
  - f. the quality of student work during the week
  - g. the rigor of the content vs. the color of the event
  - h. parts of Ocean Week that can be extended or applied to other parts of the school year
  - i. the effectiveness of mainstreaming special populations

The Ocean Week Planning Worksheet on the following page corresponds to the roman numerals and capital letters in the outline. It is written specifically for the Ocean Week coordinator, but many sections apply to every classroom teacher. This worksheet points you toward visualizing the entire planning process and structuring your time accordingly, from inspiration to evaluation. Participation as fully as possible in committees and preliminary planning makes every teacher an indispensable Ocean Week cook.

## **OCEANS WEEK BRAINSTORMING**

Teachers from MARE Ocean Week schools around the country made the following suggestions for events that they found particularly successful. You may want to use the categories as a starting point to brainstorm at your own school. Flipcharts prepared with the following lists are a good way of sharing these ideas.

### **COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS**

*(If one to four teachers and/or parents volunteers sit on each of the following committees, the coordination of the event will go smoothly without overburdening anyone.)*

- Grade Level Activity Stations

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- Field Trips
  - Fundraising
  - In-Services
  - Media
  - Outreach/Guest Speakers
  - Assemblies
  - Parent Involvement/Parents Night
  - Schoolwide Scheduling
  - Supplies/Purchasing

### **KICK OFF ASSEMBLY**

- Banana Slug String Band (see MARE Guide to Outreach Programs)—BOOK NOW as they are very popular
- LHS Science Discovery Theater (see MARE Guide to Outreach Programs)
- Class Habitat Presentations: What classes are going to learn
- Sing-Along (led by teachers?)
- Skits by Teachers
- Slides from Previous Ocean Weeks
- Music/Skits written by students, classes

### **MID-WEEK ASSEMBLY**

- Storyteller: Ane Rovetta, Susan Strauss, local children's librarian—spotlight a unique culture (see MARE Guide to Outreach Programs)
- SCUBA Demonstration

### **WRAP-UP ASSEMBLY**

- Class Habitat Presentations: What classes have learned
- Habitat Hats Assembly: Each class makes hats
- Music/Skits written by students, classes
- Each grade performs its habitat song from Banana Slug String Band tape, "Slugs At Sea"
- Slides of the Ocean Week

### **OUTREACH PROGRAMS/GUEST SPEAKERS**

*(For extensive listings of specific organizations that provide speakers and outreach programs see, MARE Guide to Outreach Programs.)*

- Animal Groups (endangered species groups, marine mammal rehabilitation groups, ASPCA groups)
- City, state, or national government representatives involved with water legislation
- City, state, national parks rangers and naturalists
- College environmental education/marine science students
- Environmental groups (Audubon, Sierra Club, environmental justice groups)
- Local water companies and water treatment facilities
- Musical environmental groups



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- National Marine Fisheries Service, State fish and game offices
  - People from a recycling center
  - Science Education Centers
  - Marine labs/research stations, museums, aquariums
  - SCUBA Divers or SCUBA shop owners, especially parents
  - Song leader and/or Storyteller
  - University Speakers Bureaus, graduate students, education staffs

### **FIELD TRIPS**

*(For extensive listings of specific field trip sites and programs see, MARE Guide to Field Trips in the San Francisco Bay Area.)*

- Aquaculture centers, Oyster farms, Fish hatcheries
- Public Aquariums
- Aquarium stores
- Boat Docks/Yacht Harbors
- Environmental Education Centers/Nature Centers
- Fish Markets
- Fossilized marine invertebrate sites
- Islands
- Lighthouses
- Marine laboratories
- Recycling centers
- Rocky Seashores
- Sandy Beaches
- Seafood restaurants
- Shipyards
- Streams
- Water treatment centers
- Wetlands
- Estuaries
- Bogs
- Sloughs
- Creeks
- Rivers
- Watershed areas
- Zoos

### **SCHOOLWIDE PROJECTS**

- Beach Day at School: music, hot dogs, ice cream, beach games, entertainers, sand sculpture, building contest
- Ocean Dessert Contest: Cakes from parents with an ocean theme
- Habitat Charades like Seashore Charades (from MARE Teachers Guide to the Rocky Seashore)
- Habitat Parade through school or visit each classroom
- Hat Day (Habitat hats)

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- Habitat Quilt Project: Each class makes a habitat quilt (student paintings taped together) and displays it on the playground
  - Calamare Festival: Each class dissects and cooks squid
  - Parade with each grade doing a song, dance, or demo of plants or animals from their habitat
  - Recycling Drive or Contest
  - Ocean Scavenger Hunt with prizes
  - School Murals: temporary and/or permanent
  - T-Shirt Contests: upper grade and lower grade
  - Fish print (Gyotaku) with fabric paint onto T-shirts

### **ADMINISTRATOR INVOLVEMENT**

- Gain their support and confidence
- Start cultivating your administrator early
- Ask about funding availability immediately
- Ask them to attend your in-services and planning meetings
- Ask them to establish minimum standards and expectations for implementation in each classroom
- Keep them informed and INVOLVED at all times; show them student work and teacher plans
- Show your enthusiasm
- Invite the principal to take an active role in promoting Ocean Week in the assemblies and classrooms

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

- CATCH 'EM EARLY: send questionnaires home with students during registration, ask for expertise, collections, interests, talents, pictures, recipes. Follow up during first Open House with direct contact. Form Parent Ocean Committee that will work with Faculty Ocean Week Committees.
- Establish Parent Advisory Committee
- Invite Parent Experts as speakers, storytellers, chefs, to help with stations/centers, with lunch on Beach Day
- Have Baby Sitting Services available any time parent involvement is requested
- Invite parents to attend or even help with in-services
- Ask for parent volunteers for Ocean Week
- Invite PTA members onto Faculty Ocean Week Committees
- Ocean Bingo with Parents at Open House, Back to School Night or PTA meeting
- Assembly FOR PARENTS with student presentations and Ocean Activities for parents to do
- Ocean Songs Concert by kids for parents
- Ocean Week Open House, do Apples and Oceans activity (from *MARE Teachers Guide to the Open Ocean*)
- Parent/Family Field Trips on Saturday/Sunday
- Invite Parents to help lead class field trips
- Parents only Chowder Feast

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- Sea Food Pot Luck
  - Student-generated newsletters sent home

### **FUNDRAISING**

- Eisenhower Funds for science and mathematics teacher education
- School Improvement Program (SIP)
- Chapter 1 funds
- Local Bilingual Education funds
- Local business community
- Supermarkets
- Art supply stores
- Create and sell student-written Ocean Cookbook with family recipes
- Desserts Bake Sale
- California Environmental Education License Plate Fund for grants
- Ocean Art Auction
- Ocean word spell-a-thon
- Other miscellaneous small grants
- Print/Sell Ocean Stationary
- Real Art Show/Sale
- Recycle for cash
- Seafood Tasting Night
- Student Marine Art Sale; Fish Print T-Shirt Sale

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# OCEAN WEEK PLANNING WORKSHEET

Ocean Week Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Ocean Week Dates \_\_\_\_\_

**For each of these activities you may wish to record your STARTING DATE, PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE, DATE COMPLETED, PERSON RESPONSIBLE, and the RESULTS.**

## TIMELINE ACTIVITIES

I.2-10 Months  
in Advance

- A. Define Goals
- B. Plan
- C. Establish Committees
- D. Cultivate Support
- E. Contact MARE /Inservice

II.1-3 Months  
in Advance

- A. Check Committees' Progress
- B. Plan For Your Grade Level
- C. Plan For Your Class
- D. Plan SchoolWide Projects
- E. Solicit Donations
- F. Keep Calling Speakers
- G. Throw Your Fundraiser
- H. Send Letter to Parents
- I. Discuss Mainstreaming
- J. Designate Logistics Coord.
- K. Prioritize

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III. 2 Weeks to  
1 Month in  
Advance

- A.Start Student Projects
- B.Contact Media
- C.Send Invitations
- D.Plan Mainstreaming
- E.Brief Logistics Coordinator
- F.Delegate Responsibilities

IV. 1 Week in  
in Advance

- A.Develop Finalized Schedule
- B.Create Evaluation Forms
- C.Finalize Bell Schedule

V.Ocean Week

- A.OpeningDay Logistics
- B.Mid-Week Logistics
- C.Final Day Logistics

VI. One Week  
After

- A.Sleep In!
- B.Assess Ocean Week