

Creature Features

KEY CONCEPTS

Marine organisms have characteristic behaviors or physical adaptations which allow them to successfully survive in their niche in a specific habitat.

NOTE: This lesson can be presented any time after Lesson 2. Wherever you choose to present this activity, allow ample time for students to complete the research and prepare their presentations.

OBJECTIVES

Students will conduct a literature search to locate life history information about a marine organism.
 Students will communicate their library research findings to fellow students.

PROCESS SKILLS

classifying communicating

KIT MATERIALS

Most appropriate for students:

- Monterey Bay Aquarium caption sheets (Kelp Forest, Rocky Shore, and Sandy Shore)
- Pacific Intertidal Life by Ron Russon and Pam Olhausen
- Pagoo by Holling C. Holling
- Seashore (An Eyewitness Book) by Steve Parker
- The Marine Science Center: A Self-Guiding Tour Booklet
- What's For Lunch? by Sam and Beryl Epstein
- Where the Waves Break: Life At the Edge of the Sea by Anita Malnig

Adult references students may find useful:

- Monterey Bay Video Collection
- Exploring the Seashore in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon by Gloria Snively
- The Beach Book by the Western Education Development Group
- The Marine Biology Coloring Book by Thomas Niesen
- The Seaside Naturalist by Deborah Coulombe
- Tidepools by Diana Barnhart and Vicki Leon

NON KIT MATERIALS

VCR and monitor to view videotape

VOCABULARY

niche - a combination of an animal's home or physical space along with its "occupation"; what it does to eat, protect itself, reproduce, etc.

organism - a general word for any living thing

5. Discuss the information included in the sea otter "interview". What additional questions do students still have about sea otters? Discuss the information that will be interesting for presentation and should be included in their research. Information to include might be:

Is there a specific place in the habitat this organism lives?
What does the organism eat? How?
What eats this organism?
Does the organism move? How?
How does the organism protect itself?
How does the organism interact with other organisms in the habitat?
What is the life cycle of this organism?
What are the organisms' unique behaviors?
How long does this organism usually live?
Do humans use this organism as food?
How do human activities affect this organism?

6. Create a check-out system to keep track of the research references that have been included in the kit. The research references must be returned with the kit.
7. Additional presentation ideas are listed below. Communicate your expectations for the type of presentation or format students will use to report research findings.

A. The "interview" format as presented in Procedure #1 above.

B. Habitat Skits

A modification of the "interview" format could be a "skit" format. Each individual could be assigned to a specific organism in the chosen, specific habitat.

After preparing a simple costume and practicing to display appropriate behaviors, students could portray their organisms for the class.

The scene could "freeze" and one interviewer would move through the habitat interviewing each organism, one by one. It might be interesting to see the habitat at high and low tide.

C. Habitat Murals

Students create large murals depicting the habitat and create a model of the organism they have researched to place in the mural. Research findings for each organism could be presented orally or be included on the mural like an "exhibit label" in an aquarium.

D. Habitat Puppet Show

Students create a puppet of the organism they have researched. The "scene" is the chosen or assigned habitat. Students present research findings as the puppets interact with each other.

E. Habitat Raps

Students research their assigned organism, then create a rap for their assigned habitat.

An Interview With A Sea Otter

Reporter: Ahoy there, Mr. Sea Otter. I paddled out to talk with you since I couldn't catch you on the shore.

Sea Otter: Good Idea! I spend most of my time in the water. I rarely go more than three feet onto the shore.

Reporter: You look very relaxed and "laid back".

Sea Otter: This is the way I usually swim unless I'm in a hurry, then I flip over to my stomach. I eat and even sleep on my back. Sleeping is a little tricky since I have to wrap plants around me to keep from floating away.

Reporter: Living in the water, you must eat a lot of fish.

Sea Otter: No, I rarely eat fish. Clams, snails and mussels are my main dishes. I place a rock on my chest to use as a table to crack shells.

Reporter: You're mighty handsome!

Sea Otter: Oh, thank you! I take great pride in my appearance and groom myself after each meal.

Reporter: You don't see many sea otters around.

Sea Otter: No, at one time we were almost extinct because men were killing us for our beautiful fur. Now there are laws to protect us.

NOTE: This is intended to be a sample of the information that students may include in their "interviews".

