

COMMON CORE CURRICULUM MAPS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS


[Home](#) | [FAQs](#) | [About the Project](#) | [News](#) | [Contact](#)


[Grade 3](#) ▶ [Unit 2](#)
[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Inspired by the Sea

In this second six-week unit of third grade, students read stories, poetry, and informational texts that are inspired by a love of or curiosity with the sea.

OVERVIEW

[Show All](#) | [Hide All](#) | [Top](#)

They read, for example, about, a character who longs for the sea and characters who live near the sea. They become familiar with the wide range of informational text on the topic of oceans and water. They continue to review the parts of speech by comparing two poems written about oysters. The students engage the texts in multiple ways: They write stories modeled after the haystack scene in *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (Patricia MacLachlan), showing action, thoughts and feelings; and they build their knowledge of ocean animals as they research their favorite sea creature.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION



Why does the sea inspire writers?

[Standards Checklist](#)

FOCUS STANDARDS

[Show All](#) | [Hide All](#) | [Top](#)

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

- **RI.3.2:** Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
- **RI.3.9:** Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.
- **RL.3.1:** Ask and answer such questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- **L.3.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **L.3.1(a):** Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.
- **W.3.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- **W.3.3(b):** Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
- **SL.3.1:** Engage effectively in a range or collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.3.1(a):** Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](#) (1.5 MB)

SUGGESTED STUDENT OBJECTIVES

[Show All](#) | [Hide All](#) | [Top](#)

- Cite textual evidence to support an interpretation of characters' motivations.
- Write imaginary narratives using dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings.
- Explain the function of adverbs and adjectives in speech, literature, and writing.

- Compare and contrast two poems written about oysters.
- Compare and contrast two informational books about a drop of water.
- Determine the main idea and supporting details of informational text.
- Research a favorite sea animal.
- Write a short informative piece about a favorite sea animal.

SUGGESTED WORKS

Show All | Hide All | Top

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

LITERARY TEXTS

Stories

- *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (Patricia MacLachlan) (E)
- *The Storm* (The Lighthouse Family series) (Cynthia Rylant and Preston McDaniels) (E)
- *The Whale* (The Lighthouse Family series) (Cynthia Rylant) (EA)
- *The Raft* (Jim LaMarche) (E)
- *Amos & Boris* (William Steig) (E)
- *Canoe Days* (Gary and Ruth Wright Paulsen)
- *Three Days on a River in a Red Canoe* (Vera B. Williams)

Poems

- "At the Sea-side" (Robert Louis Stevenson)
- "Sleepy Pearl" (Frances Gorman Risser) "Do Oysters Sneeze?" (Jack Prelutsky)
- "Undersea" (Marchette Chute)
- "Beach Stones" (Lilian Moore)
- "The Waves" (Gertrude M. Jones)
- "A Sand Witch for a Sandwich" (Emily Sweeney)
- "A Wave" (Gussie Osborne)

Stories (Read Aloud)

- "The River Bank" in *The Wind in the Willows* (Kenneth Grahame)
- *Paddle-to-the-Sea* (Holling Clancy Holling)
- *Minn of the Mississippi* (Holling Clancy Holling)

Poems (Read Aloud)

- "The Jumblies" (Edward Lear) (E)
- "From the Shore" (Carl Sandburg) (EA)
- "Seal Lullaby" (Rudyard Kipling) (EA)
- "Song of a Shell" (Violet L. Cuslidge)
- "The Barracuda" (John Gardner)

INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

Informational Text

- *Whales* (Smithsonian) (Seymour Simon) (EA)
- *Life in a Kelp Forest* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Sea Turtles* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Partners in the Sea* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Octopuses and Squids* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Seahorses and Sea Dragons* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Disasters at Sea* (DK Readers) (Andrew Donkin)
- *Titanic: Disaster that Rocked the World* (DK Readers) (Mark Dubowski)
- *Journey of a Humpback Whale* (DK Readers) (Caryn Jenner)
- *Shark Attack!* (DK Readers) (Cathy East Dubowski)

Informational Text (Read Aloud)

- *A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder* (Walter Wick) (E)
- *A Drop Around the World* (Barbara Shaw McKinney and Michael S. Maydak)
- *John Muir: America's Naturalist* (Images of Conservationists) (Thomas Locker)

- *Rachel Carson: Preserving a Sense of Wonder* (Thomas Locker and Joseph Bruchac)
- *The Lamp, the Ice, and the Boat Called Fish: Based on a True Story*(Jacqueline Briggs Martin and Beth Krommes)
- *The Cod's Tale*(Mark Kurlansky and S.D. Schindler) excerpts, e.g., informative illustrations / text features)
- *Swimming with Hammerhead Sharks*(Kenneth Mallory)
- *Survival Secrets of Sea Animals* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Predators of the Sea* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Life on a Coral Reef* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Dolphins, Seals, and Other Sea Mammals* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Crabs* (Mary Jo Rhodes and David Hall)
- *Many Luscious Lollipops: A Book About Adjectives* (World of Language)(Ruth Heller)
- *Up, Up and Away: A Book About Adverbs* (World of Language) (Ruth Heller)

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENTS

Show All | Hide All | Top

Teacher Notes: *This unit can be tailored to meet science or social studies standards. By filling your class library with books about food chains, ecosystems, and/or nature preservation, you have a rich science unit. By focusing on the geography of and people living near to lakes, rivers, and oceans, you have a strong social studies unit.*

Class Discussion / Literary

Review characters and character motivation from the first unit. Introduce the book *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (Patricia MacLachlan) as historical fiction: a fictional story from the days of settling the prairies. Introduce also the name of the unit: "Inspired by the Sea." As you read the first chapter of this book, challenge students to look for specific places in the text where they can prove that a character in the story is "inspired by the sea." Ask students to give you a "thumbs up" when they hear / see a line in the text that talks about a character "inspired by the sea." Students should easily detect Sarah as the character motivated by her love of the sea. One of her letters reads, "I have always loved to live by the sea." Create a chart and write down any evidence of Sarah's motivation. Discuss what motivates the other characters. Each day as students come together to discuss the reading, instruct students to be prepared to give textual evidence of Sarah's motivation and the motivation of at least one other character. (RL.3.3, RL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.1a)

Narrative Writing / Literary Activity

Chapter 5 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* contains a narrative about "haystacks." Prepare students to write well-developed narratives and guide a discussion of the way Patricia MacLachlan wrote the haystack section by asking them the following questions about the narrative in the chapter:

- How many of you wanted to try sliding down a haystack after reading that scene?
- What was it in her writing that made you feel like you were there?
- How did you know what the characters were feeling?
- How did the dialogue help you to "be there"?
- How did she communicate action? Thoughts? Feelings?
- How did she order the events?
- How did she close the scene?

Then give the students this prompt: "Imagine that you are in Massachusetts with your family. You are on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and you are allowed to ride down a sand dune. Write a story about your experience, showing the actions, your thoughts, and your feelings through dialogue and description." (RL.3.1, W.3.3, W.3.4, L.3.2c, W.3.5, L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, W.3.10, L.3.6, L.3.3a)

Class Discussion / Language Activity

Many Luscious Lollipops (Ruth Heller) teaches about adjectives through several language lessons. Read this book to the class, covering a few pages a day so that students may incorporate what they learn each day into conversation and writing. Use the adjectives and adverbs (which are covered in another Heller book, *Up, Up and Away*) to build interesting sentences about the sea and in students' own narratives. Be sure students can explain the function of each part of speech (adjectives and adverbs) and its use in literature, speech, and writing. (L.3.1g, L.3.2d, L.3.5b)

Class Discussion / Poetry

Read two poems aloud that have similar topics such as: "Sleepy Pearl" (Frances Gorman Risser) and "Do Oysters Sneeze" (Jack Prelutsky) Ask the students the following questions:

- What do you think is the message of each poem? Cite evidence from the poem, by stanza and line, that hints at the meaning.
- How are these poems similar? How are they different?
- Which of the poems do you think is the best? Why? (RL.3.5, RL.3.9, SL.3.1a, SL.3.1d)

Class Discussion / Informational Text

Read aloud two books with similar topics, such as: *A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder* (Walter Wick) and *A Drop Around the World* (Barbara Shaw McKinney). As you read the books, discuss the following questions:

- What is the main idea of the book? Of each section?
- What are the key points used to create the main idea?
- How are the two books similar?
- How are they different?
- What are the text features used by the authors/illustrators to teach more about a drop of water?
- Do these books have the same purpose?
- Does one of the books teach more than the other?
- How could one of the books be improved? (SL.3.2, SL.3.1d, RI.3.2, RI.3.9, RI.3.6)

Informational Text

Choose a book that has good examples of text features (e.g., cross-section diagram, table) such as *The Cod's Tale* (Mark Kurlansky). Create a list of all the text features the students will see in the book. Display the text as you read, instructing students to look for text features as you turn each page. Give each student one Post-It. As they spot a text feature, have them write the page number on the Post-It and put it by the name of the text feature on the list. Discuss the purpose of each text feature in general and in the text you are reading. (RI.3.5)

Writing / Informational Text

Give the students this prompt: "You have read books about animals that live in the sea. Think about which animal has been most interesting to you. Write a paragraph about what you have learned about a specific sea animal: its habitat, its adaptations, and its diet. You may want to do more research on the Internet, in encyclopedias, or in a library book to add to your learning." (SL.3.1a, W.3.10, W.3.2, RI.3.2)

Language Activity

Choose an interesting sea animal from the books you have read together as a class. Ask the students to come up with five adjectives each to describe the animal. Generate a list of adjectives from the list of student ideas. Then have students come up with movements the animal makes and five adverbs to go with the movements. Create short sentences using the adjectives and adverbs (e.g., "Huge whales glide *gracefully*"). After students write several of the sentences on a chart, have them practice making new sentences with comparative or superlative adjectives and adverbs (e.g., "This huge whale glides *more gracefully* than that one.") (L.3.1g, SL.3.6)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Show All | Hide All | Top

- "[Ocean Poems](#)" (Kaunakakai Multiage Primary School, Kaunakakai, HI) (RL.3.5)
- [Patricia MacLachlan \(1938 - \) Biography](#) (JRank Encyclopedia) (RI.3.3)
Note: Patricia MacLachlan is the author of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.
- [Reading and Writing About Pollution to Understand Cause and Effect](#) (ReadWriteThink) (RI.3.3)
- [History of America "On the Water"](#) (Smithsonian, National Museum of American History) (RI.3.3)
- [Blue Planet: Seas of Life](#) (five-disc box set), BBC (2008)

TERMINOLOGY

Show All | Hide All | Top

- adjectives
- adverbs
- author
- comma
- compare
- contrast
- dialogue
- illustrator
- inspire
- line
- motivation
- poem
- poet
- quotation marks
- stanza

- text evidence
- text features

MAKING INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Show All | Hide All | Top

This unit teaches:

- **Geography:** Rivers of North America (e.g., the Mississippi River and the St. Lawrence River)
- **Science:** Aquatic life (e.g., animals, habitats, and environmental conservation)

This unit could be extended to teach:

- **Geography:** Exploration (e.g., Search for the Northwest Passage)
- **History:** Life on the prairie (e.g., related to *Sarah, Plain and Tall*)
- **Science:** Animal classifications (e.g., amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals) and ecology (e.g., interdependence, ecosystems, and environmental conservation)

Previous | Next

© 2011 Common Core, Inc. All rights reserved. • [Contact Us](#)