

World Oceans Day

Actual Holiday: June 8

First Celebrated: 1992

June



Introduction

World Oceans Day began in Canada in 1992 and was declared a National Day by the United Nations in 2008. It is a day to honor, celebrate, and protect the oceans, which are considered to be the lungs of our planet. Help your class celebrate this day by learning a bit more about oceans and the layers within them, which are important aspects of sustaining and protecting ocean life.

Materials

- *Layers of the Ocean* activity sheet (page 39)
- three different colors of blue crayons and other art supplies
- scissors
- glue

The Activity

- Tell students that today they will be celebrating World Oceans Day.
- Talk to students about their experience with the ocean. Have they ever been to the beach or out on a boat? Have they been on an airplane that flew across an ocean or two? Although the ocean looks like an endless expanse of blue from above, just below those waves lives an entire world of animals and plants. Ask students if they are aware that the ocean has different layers within it. The layers differ by the amount of sunshine that each layer receives.
- Distribute the *Layers of the Ocean* activity sheet to students. Have them take a look at the different layers shown on the page. They should color the bottom layer the darkest blue, the top layer the lightest blue, and the middle layer the color in between.
- Give students time to color and cut out the animal pictures at the bottom of the page. Have them set these aside to use later in the activity.
- Explain to students that the top layer of the ocean receives the most sunlight. That's why it is the lightest in color. It is called the *sunlight zone*. It is the warmest part of the ocean. It is the top 200 meters (about 650 feet) of the ocean. It is the only part of the ocean that has plants. Animals such as dolphins, jellyfish, and sea turtles live there because the food they eat requires sunlight or plant life to stay alive. Have students glue the dolphin, jellyfish, and sea turtle in this zone.
- The second layer of the ocean is called the *twilight zone*. It is the part of the ocean from about 200 meters to 900 meters (about 650 feet to 3,000 feet) deep. Sunlight cannot touch this part of the ocean. It is much colder than the sunlight zone. Animals such as longneck eels, crabs, and giant squid live here. Have students glue these animals into the middle zone.
- The third layer of the ocean is called the *midnight zone*. It is even darker than it is in the twilight zone. It begins at about 900 meters (3,000 feet) deep and continues to about 4,000 meters (13,000 feet) deep. Some of the animals in this part of the ocean live on the ocean floor. Octopuses, sea stars, and angler fish can be found here. Have students glue these animals into the midnight zone.
- The *abyssal zone* is not included on the activity sheet, but it is even deeper than the midnight zone. The water there is very cold, dark, and calm. Very few creatures can live in this part of the ocean.
- Have students look at their final projects. Were they surprised by where some of the animals lived? Does this change their view of the ocean and what lies within it?

Name: _____

Layers of the Ocean

