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Subject links:
Science

Age: 5-7

Curriculum links:
UK wildlife, Animal classification, Habitats, Investigation

Ocean Literacy Principles:

5. The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems

Learning Objectives:

- To be able to identify and describe a variety of marine and coastal animals
- To be able to group animals together based on shared characteristics

Resources provided:

- Ocean animals poster
- Grouping animals
- Grouping animals summary
- Ocean giant cards
- Grouping giants poster template
- Grouping giants poster answers
- Curriculum links

Extra resources required:

Scissors, glue, poster paper and pens

Grouping animals

Sustainability Goals:



Step 1

Background

Animals are grouped according to their physical and behavioural characteristics. Vertebrates are animals with a backbone and invertebrates have no backbone. Within each broad group, there are sub-groups or classes. This lesson focuses on the characteristics and features of marine mammals, amphibians, fish, birds and reptiles.

Step 2

Set the Scene

5-10 minutes – Ocean animals

Explain that today you're going to learn about animals that live in the ocean. Ask students if they can think of any creatures that live in the ocean. Display the [Ocean animals poster](#) and try to identify as many creatures as possible.

Step 3

Activities

Activity 1: 10 minutes – Grouping marine animals

Explain that today's lesson is going to focus on marine and coastal animals. Show the [Grouping animals sheet](#) to introduce sub-groups: mammals, fish, birds, amphibians and reptiles. Talk through the characteristics of each subgroup. Explain that amphibians don't live in the sea.

Step 3

Activities

Activity 2: 10 minutes – Ocean giants

Show the [Grouping giants cards](#) on your whiteboard. Explain that all these creatures need to be large because they travel over great distances, live in a huge habitat and in cold environments. Ask students if they think any of these animals are found in the UK. Which ones? (sea eagle, leatherback turtle, basking shark, dolphin, tuna, humpback whale). Briefly discuss the characteristic features of each animal, giving clues to their group.

Activity 3: 30 minutes – Grouping ocean giants

Split class into small groups. Handout [Grouping giant cards](#) and scissors, glue and a ocean giant sort out [template](#) printed A3. Working together in groups, students should cut out the animal cards and stick on to the correct group. Display [Grouping animals summary](#) on your white board at the front of the class to help. When groups have finished reveal answers by showing [Grouping giants answers](#).

Step 4

Extend

1 hour – Fact files

In groups students could choose an animal to study further using books or the internet to research more information. They could create a poster on their chosen species.

Step 5

Reflect

Show the [Grouping giants poster template](#) to summarise learning.
What is a characteristic of mammals?
What is a characteristic of fish?
What is a characteristic of reptiles?
What is a characteristic of birds?

Step 6

Follow up

Learn more activities about ocean giants in our [Stupendous sharks](#) lesson plan. For more activities related to grouping animals, take a look at our [What is a food chain?](#) lesson.

Our amazing UK wildlife



mcsuk.org

- 1 Thongweed
- 2 Painted top shell
- 3 Rosy feather star
- 4 Cuckoo wrasse
- 5 Plumose anemone
- 6 Ballan wrasse
- 7 Short-snouted seahorse
- 8 Phosphorescent sea pen
- 9 Long-clawed squat lobster
- 10 Hedgehog sponge
- 11 King scallop
- 12 Common sea urchin
- 13 Angler fish
- 14 Moon jellyfish
- 15 Thornback ray
- 16 Black brittle star
- 17 Common hermit crab
- 18 Light-bulb sea squirt
- 19 Basking shark
- 20 Compass jellyfish
- 21 Sea slug
- 22 Snakelocks anemone
- 23 Common starfish
- 24 Dahlia anemone
- 25 Lesser spotted dogfish
- 26 Spiny starfish
- 27 Edible crab
- 28 Common cuttlefish
- 29 Star sea squirt
- 30 Lemon sole
- 31 Bib
- 32 Conger eel
- 33 Common lobster
- 34 Pink sea fan
- 35 Common whelk
- 36 Mermaid's glove
- 37 Wolf-fish
- 38 Potato crisp bryozoan
- 39 Spiny spider crab

Vertebrates

Vertebrates are animals with a backbone, like humans.

Sea snake



Fish



Whale



Seahorse



Ray



Otter



Invertebrates

Invertebrates are animals without a backbone, like insects and jellyfish.

Sea snail



Sea spider



Anemones



Crab



Jellyfish



Grouping Animals

All vertebrates belong to one of these groups.

Mammals

eg. Human



Live on land or in sea
Have hair or fur
Warm blooded
Have live young
Breathe with lungs
Some lay eggs

Fish

eg. Tuna



Live in sea
Have scales
Cold blooded
Lay eggs
Breathe with gills

Reptiles

eg. Sea snake



Live on land or in sea
Have scales
Cold blooded
Lay eggs
Breathe with lungs

Birds

eg. Seagull



Live on land or sea
Have feathers and wings
Warm blooded
Lay eggs
Breathe with lungs

Amphibians

eg. Frog



Live on land and in fresh water
Have smooth, moist skin
Cold blooded
Lay eggs
Breathe with lungs and gills



Pelican



Crocodile



Sea eagle



King penguin



Leatherback turtle



Manta ray



Polar bear



Basking shark



Bottlenose dolphin



Tuna



Humpback whale



Sea snake

Grouping Giants

Please print to A3 if possible

Mammals

Reptiles

Fish

Birds

Grouping Giants

Mammals



Reptiles



Fish



Birds



Curriculum links

England

Science

- Identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.
- Identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores.
- Describe and compare the structure of a variety of common animals (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, including pets).

Wales

Science

- I can explore relationships between living things, their habitats and their life cycles.

Scotland

Sciences

- I can distinguish between living and non-living things. I can sort living things into groups and explain my decisions.