

SEA TURTLE REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT

To do in class after the field trip, before the final classroom presentation

1. **Students will read a couple paragraphs to reflect on topics introduced over the course of the school year.** The reading is available on the next page and online at oceanconnectors.org/resources.

The reading contains new vocabulary, indicated by *italics*, so it is best if teachers read the material in advance and prepare to work through it with the children.

2. After reading, **students respond to the reflection questions inside their journals using complete sentences.**
3. Please review the answers together in class.
4. This lesson covers 4th grade Common Core State Standards in ELA/Literacy, and Next Generation Science Standards 4-LS1-1, 4-LS1-2, and 4-ESS2-1.
5. **Project Based Extension: Have students draw and label a new system for food packaging that will help sea turtles and the environment.** Key questions to consider:
 - How can we decrease the amount of plastic waste?
 - How can our food packaging support the “3 R’s”?
 - What types of food labeling might help inform people and make them more responsible with disposing of their trash?

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This year you learned about sea turtles, and how people can help protect them. The oceans are so huge, deep, and full of life, that it may be tempting to think that no amount of pollution could be a problem. The fact is, pollution causes great damage, and many species suffer. Non-biodegradable garbage, like plastic bags, Styrofoam, balloons, six-pack rings, straws, and nylon rope float endlessly in the ocean currents where animals can eat them or become entangled. Oil spills coat marine species in toxic slime and contaminate the coastlines where sea turtles lay their eggs. Pollution from pesticides, sewage, and industrial wastes can make ocean habitats unlivable. Even light pollution from coastal cities can confuse turtle hatchlings, who normally use the light from the moon reflecting off the water's surface to find the ocean. They may end up going the wrong way!

One of the best ways to help sea turtles is to practice the "3 R's" – *Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle*. It is especially important to try to *reduce* the amount of trash and plastic pollution you create each day. Every year, thousands of people from different countries around the world pitch in to clean up beach trash. It is reported that over 60% of all beach trash is made of plastic. In Monterey, California a group of scuba divers, some as young as 13 years old, organized a clean-up dive. They brought up a bicycle, toilet, electric motors, fishing rods, a coffee maker, and three kitchen sinks!

Answer the questions below in your journal using *complete sentences*.

1. Why is it important to *reduce* and *reuse* before recycling?
2. What is one thing you can *reduce* in your life to help sea turtles and the ocean?
3. List three *reusable* items that can be used to cut down the amount of trash you create.
4. How does pollution harm marine animals?
5. List three ways that plastic bags, bottles, and other types of trash reach the ocean.
6. What is the problem with releasing balloons into the sky?
7. How does a sea turtle hatchling find its way to the ocean, and how might it get confused?
8. Why is it important to keep learning more about the ocean?
9. When you visit the beach this summer, how can you help sea turtles?
10. How can you help sea turtles when you visit the grocery store?

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Answer Key

This year you learned about sea turtles, and how people can help protect them. The oceans are so huge, deep, and full of life, that it may be tempting to think that no amount of pollution could be a problem. The fact is, pollution causes great damage, and many species suffer. Non-biodegradable garbage, like plastic bags, Styrofoam, balloons, six-pack rings, straws, and nylon rope float endlessly in the ocean currents where animals can eat them or become entangled. Oil spills coat marine species in toxic slime and contaminate the coastlines where sea turtles lay their eggs. Pollution from pesticides, sewage, and industrial wastes can make ocean habitats unlivable. Even light pollution from coastal cities can confuse turtle hatchlings, who normally use the light from the moon reflecting off the water's surface to find the ocean. They may end up going the wrong way!

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Answer the questions below in your journal using *complete sentences*.

1. Why is it important to *reduce* and *reuse* before recycling?
It is important to reduce and reuse first, because not all items are recyclable. Reducing is the first step towards decreasing the amount of trash we create.
2. What is one thing you can *reduce* in your life to help sea turtles and the ocean?
To help turtles and the ocean, you can produce less trash and use fewer plastic bags and straws.
3. List three *reusable* items that can be used to cut down the amount of trash you create.
Three reusable items that can cut down on the amount of trash you create include reusable shopping bags, reusable water bottles, reusable straws, and reusable utensils and lunchbox items.
4. How does pollution harm marine animals?
Pollution harms marine animals because it washes into the ocean and contaminates the coastal environment. Many marine species ingest pollution or become entangled in it and drown.
5. List three ways that plastic bags, bottles, and other types of trash reach the ocean.
Plastic bags, bottles, and other types of trash reach the ocean through storm drains, in the wind, by falling out of boats and trash cans, and through rivers and streams that connect to the sea.
6. What is the problem with releasing balloons into the sky?
The problem with releasing balloons into the sky is that they eventually deflate and fall back down to Earth. They are likely to end up in the ocean because 70% of the earth's surface is covered by water. Marine animals like sea turtles mistake balloons for their prey and swallow them.
7. How does a sea turtle hatchling find its way to the ocean, and how might it get confused?
Hatchlings use their vision to see moonlight reflecting off the water's surface. City lights can confuse hatchlings and make them go the wrong direction, towards the city instead of the ocean.
8. Why is it important to keep learning more about the ocean?
It is important to keep learning more about the ocean because new scientific information and new species are always being discovered and ocean conditions are constantly changing. The ocean is the most mysterious environment known to humans with much more to be revealed still.
9. When you visit the beach this summer, how can you help sea turtles?
You can help turtles at the beach by picking up trash and telling friends and family to do the same.
10. How can you help sea turtles when you visit the grocery store?
When you visit the grocery store you can help sea turtles by using reusable bags, buying products without a lot of wasteful packaging, and educating others about the importance of these actions.