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Introduction

Oceans contains a captivating, whole language, thematic unit about the seas. At its core are two high-quality children's literature selections, *Blueback* and *The Cay*. For each of these books, activities are included which set the stage for reading, encourage the enjoyment of the book, and extend the concepts gained. In addition, the theme is connected to the curriculum with activities in language arts (including language experience and writing suggestions), maths, science, SOSE, art, music and life skills (cooking, etc.). Many of these activities encourage cooperative learning. Suggestions for bulletin boards are additional time savers for the busy teacher. Furthermore, directions for student-created Big Books and a culminating activity, which allow students to synthesise their knowledge in order to produce products that can be shared beyond the classroom, highlight this very complete teacher resource.

This thematic unit includes:

- literature selections** — summaries of two children's books with related lessons (complete reproducible pages) that cross the curriculum
- poetry and drama** — suggested selections and lessons enabling students to act out and create their own stories
- language experience and writing ideas** — daily suggestions as well as activities across the curriculum, including Big Books
- bulletin board ideas** — suggestions and plans for student-created and/or interactive bulletin boards
- homework suggestions** — extending the unit to the child's home
- curriculum connections** — in English, maths, science, SOSE, art, music, and life skills such as cooking and careers
- group projects** — to foster co-operative learning
- a bibliography** — suggesting additional books on the theme

Blueback

by Tim Winton

Abel Jackson loves being underwater. He is only ten years old and can not remember a time when he could not dive. His mother said he was a diver before he was born. Abel had lived by the sea at Longboat Bay ever since he could remember. His whole life was the sea and the bush. Every day was special, his mother always told him this, but it all became much more precious the day he first shook hands with old Blueback.

Blueback is a story about people learning from nature and about a boy and his life-long friend. Also interwoven into the story are environmental issues concerning the sea and mans destruction of it. This story is a perfect springboard for exploring the real reasons for these occurrences and it will most likely lead students into wanting to learn more about the wondrous ocean world. The outline below is a suggested plan for using the various activities that are presented in this unit. You can adapt these ideas to fit your own classroom situation.

Sample Plan

Day I

- Daily Writing Activities: Animal Webs (page 52)
- Groper background information (page 11)
- Familiarise students with *Blueback*
- Predict story events
- Read *Blueback*
- Homework (page 8)

Day II

- Continue Daily Writing Activities
- Use Homework to make an Ocean Alphabet
- Essential Comprehension Activities: Pictures of Events (page 7) and Time Line (page 8)
- Art: A Sandy Scene (page 18)

Day III

- Continue Daily Writing Activities
- Continue Open Alphabet
- Words worksheet (page 14)
- Polar Opposites (page 15)
- Geography: Features (page 12)
- Follow-up: Geographical features (page 21)

Day IV

- Continue Daily Writing Activities
- Science: Plant Index File (page 9)
- Maths: Ocean Plant Facts (page 23)
- Tides Comprehension (page 24)
- Abel Game (pages 16 and 17)

Day V

- Culminating Activity: Ocean Blocks (pages 19 and 20)

Overview of Activities

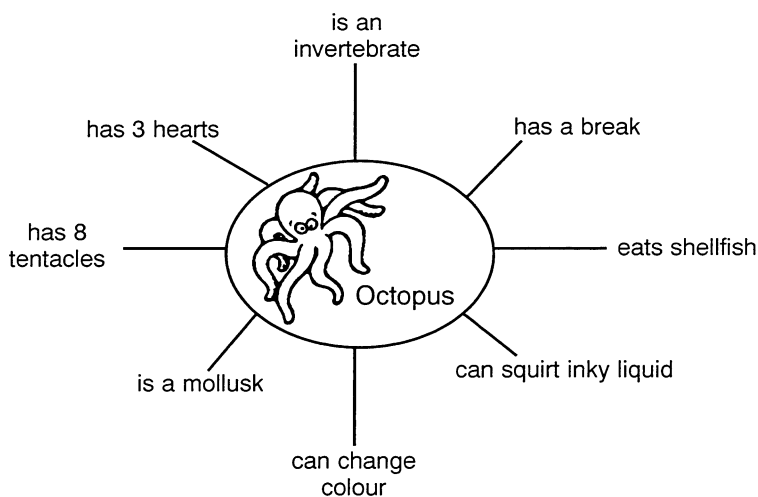
SETTING THE STAGE

1. Prepare your classroom for an Ocean Theme. Set up an appropriate notice board backing (see page 76) for students to complete and add to as the unit progresses. Display ocean books, shells, sand, animals, and any other appropriate objects at a special Oceans Learning Centre See page 80 for a list of suggested books to use.



2. **USSR.** Set aside a 15-minute block of time each morning (or right after a break or lunch) to do some Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading. Students should read from the ocean books available in the classroom or from a library. When they have completed a book, have them write a Book Review. Complete directions and a sample form to use can be found on page 10. Keep the Book Reviews in a plastic or metal file box for students to use before they choose another book to read. If your classroom is equipped with a computer, you may want to store the Book Reviews on the data base system.

3. If possible, set up an aquarium in your classroom, visit an aquarium or show a video on sea life. Assign a different sea creature to each pair or group of students. Have them research to find out about their creature. They can make a web (see pages 52 and 54) from their information (see sample below). Then make a class book of webs to display at the Ocean Learning Centre.



4. **Begin Daily Writing Activities.** Choose from the three projects described on pages 52 to 55

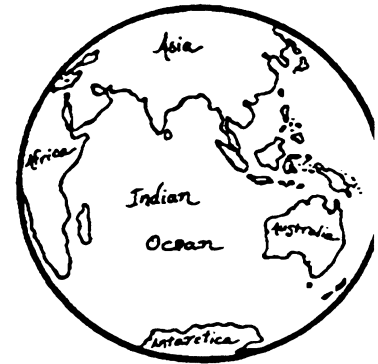
5. Introduce *Blueback* by Tim Winton (Pan Macmillan, 1997) with this technique: Display a picture of a groper. Ask the students to identify it. After it has been correctly identified, ask what they know about gropers. Record their responses on paper or the board. (Save for future activities and reference.) Learn about real gropers (see page 11). Follow up by directing students to draw pictures of gropers and label the following parts: eye, mouth, tail, gill, dorsal fin, anal fin, pectoral fin.

Research Projects

These co-operative activities are designed to increase students' knowledge of geographical terms and locations. Extension ideas are also provided for those who want to do further research.

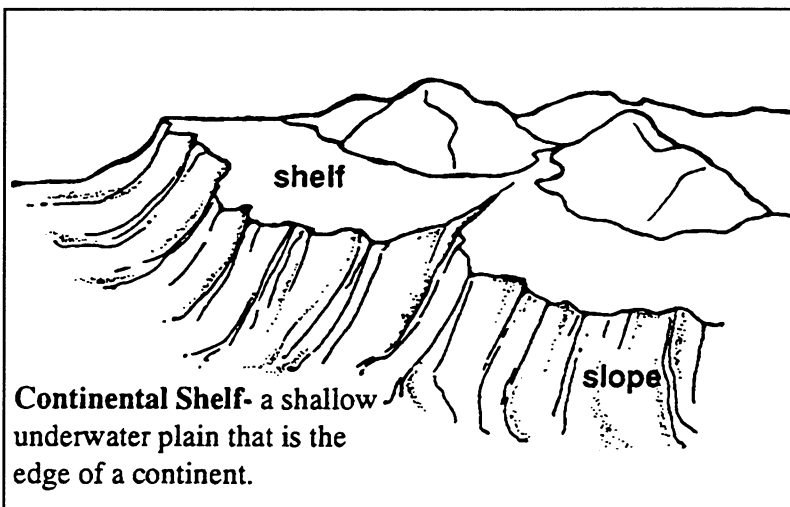
MAPPING

- Group students in pairs
- Abel's work as a marine biologist takes him all over the world. Some of the places he might have visited are: The Great Barrier Reef, The Greek Islands, Antarctica, the Mediterranean Sea, Java, Hawaii.
- Have the students find these places on a globe or in an atlas.
- **Extension:** Tell students to draw or trace the outline of the country in which each landmark can be found. Label the approximate area of each landmark on the proper portion of the country. If each is drawn on a separate page, staple them together to make booklets. Share with the class.



FEATURES

- * As a whole group, brainstorm the names of the geographical features mentioned in the story (mountain, desert, sea, islands, beaches, bay, head, cave, the bush).
- * In small groups, direct students to fold a large sheet of butcher paper into eighths. Unfold and write the name of a different feature at the bottom of each space.
- * Have the students write a definition and draw a picture of each physical feature.



Extension: Ask students which of the features are related to oceans and explain how. Direct them to research what the ocean floor actually looks like. Have them write a description, draw pictures, or make models of the ocean floor. Share the projects in small groups. Another extension idea is to have students find out about other water feature such as bays, reefs, sea caves, sea mounts, mouth, isthmus, gulf, etc. Students can make an ocean terms book or alphabet.