

**RESOURCE LIBRARY**  
ACTIVITY : 45 MINS

## Your Ocean

Students discuss a quote about the ocean and freewrite about the importance of the ocean and their daily connection to the ocean. Students map their location in relation to the ocean. Then they watch and discuss a video.

### GRADES

9 - 12+

### SUBJECTS

*Biology, Ecology, Earth Science, Oceanography, Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography*

### CONTENTS

2 PDFs, 1 Video, 2 Links

## OVERVIEW

Students discuss a quote about the ocean and freewrite about the importance of the ocean and their daily connection to the ocean. Students map their location in relation to the ocean. Then they watch and discuss a video.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/your-ocean/>

## DIRECTIONS

**1. Have students freewrite about the importance of the ocean and map their relationship to the ocean.**

Tell students that for homework they will freewrite for five minutes in response to the following question: *What does the ocean mean to you?* Explain to students that they should write continuously about anything that comes to mind about the topic. Ask students not to make corrections or censor what they write. If students are struggling to make connections to the ocean because they live inland, ask them to write a story about a trip they have taken to the ocean or to write an imaginary story from the perspective of a fisherman or marine scientist. For the second part of their homework, have students view a world map. Ask them to do the following:

- Find their location.
- Find the closest ocean.
- Think about: *What moves from you to the ocean? What moves from the ocean to you?*

Then, for five minutes have students add to their freewriting pages in response to those same questions.

## **2. Have students review and discuss their freewriting homework assignments.**

Using the Water Planet Mega Map, included in the World Physical MapMaker Kit, ask student volunteers to do the following:

- Label their location.
- Label the closest ocean.
- Use arrows, symbols, and labels to illustrate: *What moves from you to the ocean? What moves from the ocean to you?*

## **3. Have students read and discuss a famous quote about the ocean.**

Write the following quote on the board: “Even if you never have the chance to see or touch the ocean, the ocean touches you with every breath you take, every drop of water you drink, every bite you consume. Everyone, everywhere is inextricably connected to and utterly dependent upon the existence of the sea.” Tell students the quote is by oceanographer Sylvia Earle, from her book *The World is Blue*. Explain that Sylvia Earle, called “Her Deepness,” has been one of the most influential ocean explorers, scientists, authors, lecturers, and conservationists over the past 40 years. She has led more than 60 undersea expeditions worldwide, logging more than 6,000 hours underwater. She was captain of the first all-female

team to live in an underwater habitat and has started her own companies that design underwater vehicles, allowing scientists to explore and study depths of the ocean that were previously inaccessible to humans. In the early 1990s, Dr. Earle was chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and she is currently an explorer-in-residence at the National Geographic Society. She is a passionate and dedicated advocate for the world ocean and the creatures that it supports and sustains. Her work and lectures strive to educate the public about the vital role the ocean plays in supporting all life, including humans. Read the quote one more time. Give students two minutes to think about the quote and what they know about the ocean. Then have a whole-class discussion about what they think the quote means and how all people are connected to the ocean.

#### 4. Have students watch and discuss a video clip.

Distribute the handout Podcast Vocabulary List. Read aloud the directions. Clarify terms for students, as needed. As a class, watch the 18-minute video clip of oceanographer Sylvia Earle as she makes her TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Prize wish: to protect our oceans. Then have a whole-class discussion. Ask:

- *What does Sylvia Earle mean when she refers to the ocean as our “life support system?”*
- *Do you agree or disagree that “health to the ocean means health to us?” Explain.*
- *Which image or graphic shown by Sylvia Earle impressed you the most? Why?*
- *What new information did you learn from Sylvia Earle’s speech?*
- *Sylvia Earle’s goal is “to ignite public support for a global network of marine protected areas.” What do you think Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are?*
- *Sylvia Earle’s wish is for humans to do everything we can to reach that goal. What can you do to help?*

## Modification

Write Dr. Earle's quote on a poster board and display it in the classroom a couple of days before ocean instruction begins.

## Informal Assessment

Use students' completed freewriting as a pre-assessment of their prior knowledge about the ocean and their understanding of their own connection to the ocean.

# Extending the Learning

Show students the National Geographic video "Water: State of the Earth." Have a whole-class discussion about its contents, highlighting the concepts of sustainability and Marine Protected Areas. As homework, have students watch the Sylvia Earle TED video at home and discuss the ocean with their families.

## OBJECTIVES

## Subjects & Disciplines

### **Biology**

- [Ecology](#)

### **Earth Science**

- [Oceanography](#)

### **Geography**

- [Human Geography](#)
- [Physical Geography](#)

## Learning Objectives

Students will:

- describe and map how humans are connected to the ocean
- articulate why the ocean is important in writing

## Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

## Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Research
- Writing

# Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information

## National Standards, Principles, and Practices

### NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 14:

How human actions modify the physical environment

- Standard 8:

The characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems and biomes on Earth's surface;

### Preparation

### What You'll Need

### MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Pencils

### REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector, Speakers
- Plug-Ins: Flash

### PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

## GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

## OTHER NOTES

Print, laminate, and assemble the Water Planet Mega Map before class. Before starting the activity, download and queue up the video.

## BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

### Background Information

Over 70 percent of planet Earth is covered with water. Although we have labels that separate names of different regions, the Earth ultimately has just one large, interconnected ocean. Human activities impact nearly all parts of the ocean. Oceanographer Sylvia Earle is working to protect the world's ocean from further harm.

### Prior Knowledge

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### Recommended Prior Activities

- [MPA Designation and Management](#)

### Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
ocean	<i>noun</i>	large body of salt water that covers most of the Earth.
oceanographer	<i>noun</i>	person who studies the ocean.

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### For Further Exploration

#### Books

- Earle, Sylvia. *The World Is Blue: How Our Fate and the Ocean's Are One*. National Geographic Society: Washington, D.C., 2009.

## Websites

- Thank You Ocean: Public Service Announcement

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