

WHALES! Teaching Guidelines

Subject: Science

Topics: Earth and Environmental Sciences, Oceanography, Biology

Grades: 6 - 12

Knowledge and Skills:

- Understands the role that whales play in the ocean ecosystem
- Know the life cycle of the whale
- Knows the migration habits of whales
- Knows some methods of assessing the size of wild animal populations

Subject: Arts

Topics: Entertainment (Radio and Television)

Grades: 6 - 12

Knowledge and Skills:

- Understands the role of research in non-fiction productions

Materials: Paper, pencil, drawing materials

Procedure:

This project should be done in teams of three or four students.

Distribute the handout and discuss it. Have each team study the memo carefully and make notes about exactly what they are supposed to do.

Suggest to the students that they make a list of each of the questions they are supposed to find answers for, and any other tasks to be completed (point out the request for drawings).

Tell the students they will need to work out a way to divide up the labor.

Give students a schedule for working on the project and a due date.

W H A L E S !



To: Documentary Research Team

From: Executive Producer of "Whales!"

I am thrilled to have you all "on board" for this project and eager for you to get started digging up data for the exciting documentary we are going to produce.

As you can probably guess from the title, our program is about whales. We want to present information about whales that live in all of the oceans of the Earth.

The central issue of the show is going to be the role that whales play in the ocean's ecosystem and how humankind is affecting whales as a species. Are they still endangered? (How does anyone count whales, anyway?)

Here's what I need from your team to start with: a description of where and when whales can be found, how they travel, what they live on and how they fit into the scheme of ocean life.

We should also have some key numerical facts about whales. How deep can they dive? How long do they live? How big do they get? How do they take care of their babies?

Also, I've heard they can communicate to each other from hundreds of miles away. Is this true?

And I'm hoping you will find some other things to tell me about whales that would really fascinate our viewers.

Remember, this is a documentary, and the visual images are important. It would be helpful if you could sketch out a couple of drawings that you think communicate something important about whales.

Finally, your report should lay out the locations where we should go for the show—places where we can see whales or talk to people that know about whales. Since whales move around, you also need to tell us when to go there.

The coordinator for this production will tell you when I need this data and how long the report should be. Make it clear, concise, and captivating. But make it fast!