

Ocean of life



KNOW:

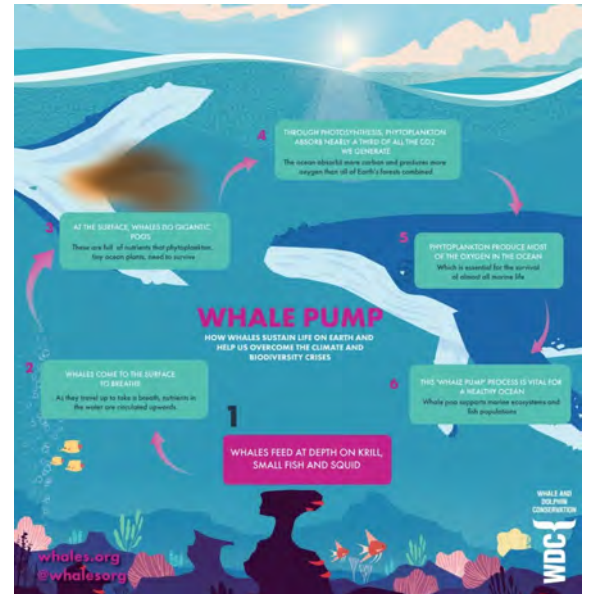
The ocean and the life within it shape the features of the earth
The ocean gives us life - every other breath we take is provided by the ocean

The life of a whale

Whales tell a story of life in our ocean, if we are ready to listen...

Read this aloud, then discuss:

My story comes from the deep, from the salty depths you'll likely never know,
As a journey maker I rise and fall, traversing the abyss, I come and go.
A salty soup I sink through, to find my peace and calm,
But I know the surface too, rising through layers, the sun on my skin like balm.
They call me 'the farmer of the ocean', but they don't know me at all,
I'm that black shiny fluke in the distance, they hunt with their boats and they call.
They motor across the waves to catch me, but just in time I descend,
As I spiral and turn I blow bubbles, I mix salts and sugars with no end.
I provide a tiny army of producers with food, I tend and I care for my team,
They bloom and dance in my pathways and on the dark night surface they gleam.
A long life I lead and much matter I consume, but all lives must come to an end,
And as I sink to the bottom, lifeless but free, I will rest here as food for my friends.
They talk about trees so much up above, on the land where they dance and sing,
But know me now, as you look out to sea, for my life is key to everything.



Use this diagram to help you discuss

Every other breath

FACT: The ocean generates 50% of the oxygen we need, produced by plankton and marine habitats such as seagrass and kelp forests.

Get the group to practice ocean breathing... as follows:

Close the eyes and begin to take slow, deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth.

As you inhale, imagine you are filling your lungs with the clean, fresh air of the ocean, and as you exhale, blowing a breeze across the ocean, releasing any negative emotions or stress. Listen to the sound of the breath, like the sound of waves ebbing and flooding the shore. Repeat process for as long as you wish, but explaining after that half that time you spent breathing was ocean made.

Whales and trees

Whales are ecosystem engineers - they change the environment around them for the better and keep the ocean healthy. Some people say that we should save the whales before saving the world's forests and that 'one whale is worth a thousand trees' (IMF, 2019). But what do you think? Is it easier to love forests than whales as they are in our world? Are there not other important blue carbon habitats to save first like coral reefs? Do some research into blue (and green) carbon habitats and species and have a debate on 'what to save first in the fight against climate change'?

Extra resources

- <https://uk.whales.org/whales-dolphins/climate-giants/>
- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/whales-and-carbon-sequestration-can-whales-store-carbon>
- <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/ocean>
- <https://www.projectjonah.org.nz/whales-and-climate-change/>

