

Oceans

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets

Contents:

- Two books - one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey



for teachers and librarians

This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about snow, appropriate for a first grade listening level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of suggested alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The featured books are **Flotsam** by David Wiesner and **The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor** by Joanna Cole, illustrated by Bruce Degen. **Flotsam**, the beautifully illustrated wordless picture book that won the 2007 Caldecott Medal, reveals the secrets held in a wave-battered underwater camera found on the beach by a young boy. After the boy has the camera's film developed, imaginations are put to work as the reader views photographs of a curious world under the sea. In **The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor** readers also get an unusual look at what's beneath the ocean's waves as Ms. Frizzle and her students take an exciting field trip to explore the animal and plant life of the ocean. The book also discusses tides, waves, and ocean topography.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize, instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and nonfiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> Creativity Activity: a hands-on craft project
- >> Imagination Activity: encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> Get real Activity: focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> Two books — one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> Parent information sheet
- >> Three themed activity pages
- >> Bookmark
- >> Survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you.

Let reading rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website: www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact. Click on "Family Literacy Bags"

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Welcome

Dear _____

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere — not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about _____ was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> two books to share with your child
- >> three related activities
- >> bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- >> short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by _____ .

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

Teacher signature

To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Instructions

How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet

Getting ready

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction — a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

Start the fun

3. When you know you'll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child — can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. If you are using the fiction selection **Flotsam** by David Wiesner, you will be telling the story of this wordless book with your own words as you ask and answer questions, explore the pictures, and wonder what will happen next. See if your child wants to also “read” the story to you in his own way or have you read it again. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

4. When you read the nonfiction book, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The first book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book focuses on real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions. If you are sharing the title **The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor** by Joanna Cole, you should also explain to your child that the book gives real information about the ocean, but the facts are delivered by fictional characters. Be sure to read aloud the afterword in the book that explains what's real and what's not.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child's interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

When you're done...

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child's school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning — and reading — too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don't be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don't have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don't need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*

Uncovering Ocean Treasures



The ocean is important to us for many reasons. It gives us food, medicines, and mineral and energy resources. It is major part of the water cycle, climate and weather. We use it for both transportation and recreation. And it is home for some of the smallest and largest forms of life on Earth. Because of all it provides, the ocean also plays an important role in human cultures. People all over the world often express their appreciation of the ocean through art. Whether it is poetry or stories about the sea or drawings, paintings, or photographs of the ocean and its diverse plant and animal life, people everywhere are continually inspired to create and celebrate the ocean and all it gives us.

In this craft activity, your child will create a lift-the-flap picture of the beach and ocean. This activity will encourage your child to reveal which treasures of the ocean interest and inspire him.

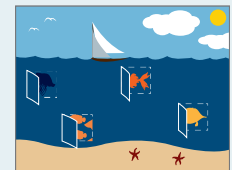
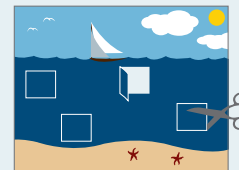
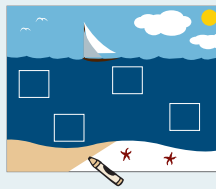
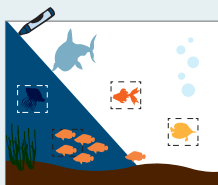
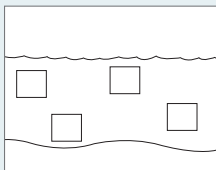
Supplies

- >> Our Sea and Shore template
- >> Tape or glue
- >> Scissors
- >> Pencil, crayons or markers, or paint

Getting Started

As you read *Flotsam, The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor*, or another ocean-related title, pay attention to the illustrations of the many incredible living treasures of the ocean that are hidden beneath the waves. After reading, talk with your child about how we depend on the ocean and that whether you live close to it or far away from it, the ocean plays a part in everyone's lives. Find out what your child thinks is important about the ocean.

Lining Things Up

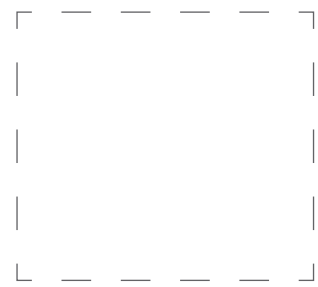


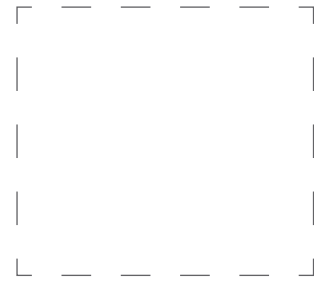
Your child's lift-the-flap picture is his chance to share how he imagines life under the sea. He may choose to be realistic and create drawings of favorite sea animals and plants or he may dream up his own fantastic underwater civilization.

The Sea and Shore template has two pages. The first page, an outline of ocean waves hitting a sandy beach, includes guidelines for cutting flaps to lift. The second page includes the same outline and indicates where to draw the pictures that will appear beneath the flaps. To make a lift-the-flap picture, your child will have to create both the scene on the beach and the pictures beneath the waves and sand.

It doesn't matter which page is drawn first, but both should be completed before cutting any flaps. Using crayons, markers or paints, encourage your child to color the first template and fill it in with things you might find on the surface — a shell on the beach, dune grass, a seagull, or a boat bobbing on the water. On the second page, have your child fill in the boxes to show what lies beneath — schools of fish, whales, sharks, coral, kelp, underwater mountains, mole crabs, or beach worms.

Since you will need sharp scissors to poke a small hole to begin cutting each flap, you should do the cutting for your child. Remember to only cut three sides for each flap. After you have cut the flaps, place the first page over the second page to make sure the openings line up with the underneath pictures. Then help your child tape the edges of the two papers together. Or you may apply small amounts of glue to the second page around the guidelines of the "beneath" pictures and then firmly press the "surface" scene down on top of it. When his picture is finished, take turns with your child to tell stories about a day at the beach.





Water, water everywhere



The ocean is big — and a big topic to discuss and learn about. What may fascinate your child about the ocean are the many creatures that live in it. Or he may be interested in ocean adventures aboard a sailboat, a submarine or surf board. Your child might be attracted to seashells, sea glass or other gifts from the sea that wash up on the beach. Or he may be captivated by the size, depth, and saltiness of ocean waters.

Start small in the bathtub. Thanks to the water cycle, all water eventually ends up in the ocean — even what goes down the bathtub drain. Talk with your child about where the water goes when it drains from the sink or bathtub. It might go to a waste water treatment plant, to a septic tank, or into a nearby lake or stream. If you are connected to a sewage system, water drains into sewer pipes and may either flow out into a river or sea, or will go to a sewage treatment facility where it will be treated, cleaned and then released into a river or sea or recycled back into the water supply.

If you are comfortable explaining how the water cycle works, your child might be interested to know that the same water is continually being recycled all around the world. (Refresh yourself on the water cycle with this summary and diagram from the U.S. Geological Survey: <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercyclesummary.html>.) He might be bathing in the same water that dinosaurs splashed in!

Even if you don't live near an ocean, you can help your child make connections by visiting streams, ponds, lakes and rivers. Head outside and get to know your local bodies of water. Wear suitable clothing and encourage exploration. Ask your child about objects near or on the water. Make notes or take photographs of what floats on the water and what you can see resting on the bottom. Bring a clear container to get a water sample for an even closer look at what else floats in the water.

Sink or Float

During your outdoor water exploration, did your child notice any birds floating on the water? Or sticks or other debris? Were there rocks or other objects settled on the bottom? Time to head back to the bathtub for some sink or float fun!

Ask your child about why a stick might float and a rock might sink. What other things that you have in your house will sink or float in a tub of water? Choose six to eight items made from different materials, such as plastic, metal, wood, cloth, and have your child write down predictions of which will sink and which will float. Then have him test his predictions. Talk about why some things float (because water pushes up on objects that are lightweight; because some objects have air inside them and that makes them lightweight, even if they are made of heavy materials) and some sink (solid objects made of heavy materials fall below the water's surface; objects that are solid have no air inside them). Think back to what you saw outside. Why did the sticks float? What helps a duck swim?

You may have seen other items outside, like plastic bottles, plastic bags and other trash. Do those items sink or float? If it floats in the water, it is called flotsam. Talk with your child about what could happen when these items reach the ocean.

Once Upon a Tide



The ocean is full of flotsam — debris that floats. In David Wiesner's *Flotsam*, a boy finds an underwater camera that has washed ashore. Many items that should never be in the ocean float there and sometimes land on beaches and are found by people.

A bit of flotsam your child might be excited to find is a message in a bottle. People have been sealing messages in bottles and putting them in the ocean for thousands of years. Talk with your child about why someone might send a message this way. The message in the bottle is often associated with a call for help from someone shipwrecked on a deserted island, but scientists have used them to study ocean currents, military operations sent them ashore with information about enemy positions, and husbands and wives have filled them with love letters.

Offer your child a clean empty bottle, paper and pencil and have him choose from one of these writing prompts:

- >> Think about all the different reasons the ocean is important to people. Write a thank you letter to the ocean for the things it provides and the things you like about the ocean.
- >> Imagine that you are a mermaid and you would like to move out of the ocean to a drier location. Write a letter asking for advice on finding a new place to live.
- >> You need help! Pretend that you are shipwrecked and write a message explaining who and where you are. You may want to look at a map or atlas for ideas for the location of your deserted island.



Your child may want to illustrate his letter before rolling it up to fit inside the bottle.

Have him hide his message in a bottle somewhere for you or another family member or friend to find, read, and enjoy!

Motion in the ocean

Kids naturally love to move around and dance is a powerful means of expression. Encourage your child to use dance or other movements to respond to words about the ocean — like *waves* or *tides* — or some of the many ocean animals described in *The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor* — like whale, dolphin, shark, clam, crab, octopus or sea slugs. Use the illustrations in your books to talk about how these animals move and share ideas on how a crab (with many legs) moves differently than a slug (with no appendages) than a shark (who has a streamlined body).

Play samples from *Sounds of the Sea* (www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=1109) for inspiration or provide background music such as Handel's *Water Music*, *Rock Lobster* by the B-52s, *Octopus's Garden* by The Beatles, or *Under the Sea* from Disney's animated film *The Little Mermaid*.

OCEANS



Featured titles

Fiction

Flotsam by David Wiesner

Nonfiction

The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor by Joanna Cole, illustrated by Bruce Degen

Additional fiction titles

Wave by Suzy Lee

Hello Ocean by Pam Munoz Ryan

The Seashore Book
by Charlotte Zolotow

Out of the Ocean by Debra Frasier

Additional nonfiction titles

What Makes an Ocean Wave?
by Melvin and Gilda Berger

Exploring the Deep, Dark Sea
by Gail Gibbons

Oceans by Seymour Simon

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