

26. “The Saltwater Habitat”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Saltwater habitats contain lots of salt. This means that we can't use saltwater for drinking. It's hard to imagine, but more of the earth is covered in water than is covered with land. Most of that water is saltwater in oceans and seas. Oceans are huge areas of saltwater that stretch all around our planet, and they are home to almost half of the world's species of animals and millions of different plants. The water in the ocean comes from rain as well as from rivers and streams that flow into the ocean. Seas are smaller areas of saltwater that have land around them or around part of them.

The largest ocean is the Pacific. The beach, and any land that runs alongside the ocean, is called the coastline or shoreline. You may think that when you are standing on the land looking at the water that the land stops where the water starts. It certainly looks that way. But there is land under the water. The land slopes downward the farther you go out into the water, which means the water is getting deeper and deeper.

The interesting thing about the ocean floor, which is the land under the ocean water, is that it isn't flat. As on land, the earth beneath the ocean waters has both mountains and valleys. This makes some areas of water in the ocean deeper than others.

The Pacific Ocean is full of both plant and animal life, but not all of them share the same space. The conditions under the water are very different in various places. Some parts are deep and some are shallow. There are cool parts and there are warm parts. Some are dark and some are full of light.

There are plants and animals in nearly every part of the ocean. Some live way out in the deep, open waters far from the land, and some live in the shallow waters closer to the shore. Some animals, like turtles, jellyfish, and crabs, live closer to the shore where it's shallower and warmer. If you have ever been to the beach and walked in the water splashing on the sand, you've been in this shallow part of the ocean.

Word Count: 370

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

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Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. ***Inferential*** Why can’t humans use most of the water on the earth?
 - » because it is saltwater and we can’t drink it
2. ***Literal*** How is the ocean floor similar to land?
 - » It has mountains and valleys.
3. ***Inferential*** Where in the ocean do animals live?
 - » Animals live in all different parts of the ocean; some live in the shallow parts of the ocean near the coastline and others live in deeper parts of the ocean.