

Shark Dissection Pre-Post Trip Activities

Activity 1. Oily Liver Exercise

Shark's livers are very oily and they use this organ to stay suspended in the water column. Assemble a variety of household liquids (water, soap, vegetable or other cooking oil, milk, etc.) and ask the class which one they think is the most buoyant. Pour each liquid into one large container with clear sides so you can see the liquids separate. Explain that oil is buoyant and is found in sharks' liver to help them not sink to the bottom of the ocean. You can also explain that sharks are heavy so their liver is the biggest organ in their body!

Activity 2. Why Don't Sharks Sink?

Sharks unlike most fish do not have a swim bladder to help them float. Pass out water bottles to your students and have them draw fins and a face on the bottles to look like sharks. Fill one bottle up with water and place it in the water bowl and observe its buoyancy. Fill a second bottle with vegetable oil. This represents the shark's lipid filled liver which helps the shark not sink to the ocean floor. Put the oil filled bottle in the water and notice how it is much more buoyant. Discuss buoyancy and how sharks use a special oil (squalene) in their liver to stay afloat.



Activity 3. Day in the Life

Have students write research papers on different shark species found along the Georgia coast. After researching, students can present in front of the class a day in the life of their shark from the point of view of their species.

Activity 4. Shark Conservation Research

Have students research current threats to sharks as well as well as conservation measures that have been taken to protect them. Students can also research how they can personally help conserve shark populations. Have students present their findings.

Activity 5. Track a Shark

OCEARCH has a global tracker that tracks many species of sharks around the world. Get your class involved and pick a shark to track. Follow its movement in the weeks leading up to the Burton 4-H on Tybee Island trip. Research information about the species of shark you are tracking. Have students write a short story from the perspective of the shark on its journey.



Activity 6. Silly Shark Skits

Have students make commercials/skits about sharks. The skit can include how rare attacks are, how attacks can be avoided, and how sharks are vital to their ecosystem. Students should be in groups with no more than four people, and also allow students to do additional research on sharks to add into their skits. Everyone in each group must present at least one fact.

Making the best better!