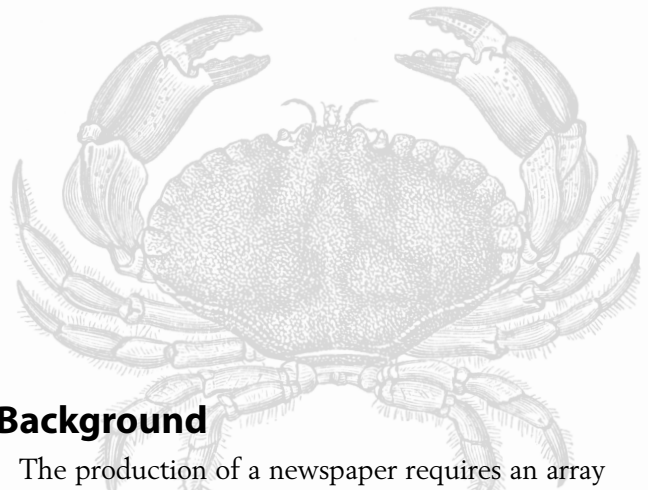


Aquatic Times



Objectives

Students will (1) identify a diversity of issues related to aquatic organisms and habitats, and (2) develop their own opinions concerning some issues involving aquatic life and habitats.

Method

Students investigate, write, and produce a newspaper that features aquatic information and issues.

Materials

Research or library resources, current nature magazines (*Ranger Rick*, *National Geographic*, etc.), writing and art materials; OPTIONAL: Cameras/film, tape recorders, computers, video equipment (Educators may want to invite a local newspaper editor or writer to come to the class to discuss the mechanics of newspaper production.)

Grade Level: 5–8

Subject Areas: Language Arts, Environmental Education

Duration: several sessions or longer

Group Size: small groups or individual activity as part of a class project

Setting: indoors

Conceptual Framework Topic Reference: ITIA, ITIB

Key Terms: newspaper, issue, aquatic

Appendices: Using Local Resources, List of Agencies and Organizations

Background

The production of a newspaper requires an array of skills that include design capabilities, writing, composition, research, and decision making. This activity provides an opportunity for the students to coordinate newspaper production with information, issues, and recommendations about aquatic organisms and their habitats.

Procedure

1. Using an actual newspaper as a model, discuss the various parts of a newspaper. Help the students recognize that in addition to news articles, other departments exist in most newspapers. Comics, sports, editorials, employment opportunities, political cartoons, food and nutrition, entertainment, business, advertisements, weather, obituaries, and many other sections are featured in a newspaper. Ask each student or team of students to choose one section of the newspaper to develop and write.
2. The theme of this newspaper is aquatic animals and plants, aquatic habitats, or aquatic-related issues. Ask the students to gather information and ideas for their chosen section. Show the students how to properly acknowledge and credit any sources they use.

NOTE: If using the optional materials listed above, familiarize the students with any resources they can use, such as the tape recorders, computers, software, cameras, and so forth.

3. The articles in the newspaper could be both playful and serious. For example,
 - Water Strider Upends at Soap Spill in Stream

- Oil Spill Threatens New Hampshire
 - Crayfish Die in Silt Avalanche
 - Too Many Wells Deplete Local Aquifer
 - Snoopy aboard the *Calypso* (cartoon)
 - Dear Abalone (advice column)
 - Aquatic Recipes
 - Tidal Waves in History
 - An interview with three grandparents about how local aquatic resources used to be
 - Fish Race to Spawning Beds! (sports)
4. Once the students have accumulated their research and begin writing their articles, encourage them to share their work. In this way, interests can merge and different talents can be called on. Keep the students on track, making sure their writing is accurate even though they may have chosen humor or satire as their approach.
 5. When most of the articles have been written, assign a small group of students to begin the production phase of the paper. The artwork can be photographs or drawings that illustrate a particular point in the article. Computer graphics can also be used to highlight specific articles. This phase of the newspaper can be produced using a computer, a typewriter, or by students neatly handwriting the articles using a specified column format (3 1/2 or 4 inches wide works well). Most computers have software that includes a newspaper template.
 6. Once the newspaper is complete, copies can be made for the class or for distribution throughout the community.
 7. Summarize the activity with a discussion of each article or feature, emphasizing what the students learned about aquatic life and habitat from this activity.

Extensions

1. Have an aquatic poster contest.
2. Establish a current events corner about wildlife.
3. Convert the newspaper to a video news format.
4. Visit a local newspaper and offer your articles for submission to the newspaper.

Evaluation

1. Identify three issues involving aquatic animals, aquatic plants, or aquatic habitats.
2. Explain why it is important to accurately report environmental information to others.
3. What are the characteristics of a good environmental reporter?

