

Saltwater & Freshwater Unit

Ecosystems

**5
Full
Weeks**

Special Education



Special Needs for Special Kids



This unit was created with this guy in mind. He has autism and an intellectual disability. He is a non-reader, and loves to swim in the lake. With some support he is able to do this unit, and enjoys the challenge. He is my tester!!

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Pages	Activity
6-8	Vocabulary board
	WEEK 1
9-32	Water, Water Everywhere book
33-43	Circle maps: saltwater and freshwater
44-45	Saltwater painting
46-51	Sorting: bodies of saltwater vs freshwater
52-57	Venn Diagram: Bodies of water
58-66	Week 1 Quiz
	WEEK 2
67-91	Let's go Fishing book
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103-109	Fish collage
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115-120	Sorting: fresh vs saltwater fish
121-131	Week 2 Quiz

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Pages	Activity
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179-183	Who lives where: animals
184-189	Sorting: freshwater and saltwater animals
190-195	Venn Diagram: freshwater and saltwater animals
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207-234	Growing Up book
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	Who am I?
	Week 4 Quiz

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Pages	Activity
	WEEK 5
284-305	Food chains in the water book
306-312	Food chains with cups
313-322	Saltwater food chains
323-332	Freshwater food chains
333-345	Sudoku puzzles
346-361	Unit assessment
362-363	Terms of Use

This unit contains over 360 pages of material. I have included a detailed lesson plan to help you make the most of everything in this unit including how to add some group activities.

Here is a quick idea of how this 5-week unit is laid out.

- *Each week has a book you will start the lesson with.*
- *Every day there is a group vocabulary activity*
- *Every day there is either a hands-on activity or cut and paste worksheet for students to complete.*
- *On the last day of the week, students will take a quiz focused on that week's material.*

Ecosystem: Saltwater and Freshwater Lesson Plan

Preparation

- Print out a vocabulary board for each student to use throughout unit
 - Laminate or place in page protector
- Book
 - Print out, laminate, and bind

Preassessment (do day 1 before starting lesson)

- Use the fact sheet to assess what your students may already know
- I cannot emphasize enough how important this step is. If you want to see growth, this preassessment is so important!!

Teaching Tips

1. *Color Coding:* this is a really easy way to add more structure to a matching activity. Outline or color in an empty box or sorting label. Outline or color in the corresponding picture symbols the same colors. Becomes a color matching task.
 - a. For more info, read more here:
<https://specialneedsforspecialkids.org/2015/09/05/using-color-coding-for-differentiation/>
 - b. I also have a blog post on differentiating one activity 3 ways:
<https://specialneedsforspecialkids.org/2018/10/22/differentiating-1-activity-3-ways-easily-and-effectively/>
2. *Make your own copies of the activities:* Every day I review the activity we did yesterday. For that reason:
 - a. I often complete the activity myself and often laminated it for easy review that I could use year after year.
 - b. My copies were also helpful as either a model for students who needed more support or as a way for more advanced students to self-check their work.
3. *Options for Use:* Turn any activity into a reusable file folder activity by laminating and adding Velcro.
 - a. For more info, watch this video here:
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Making-File-Folder-Activities-3474240>

The lesson plans contain:

Overall tips for teaching
students with significant
needs

Quick Look

Week 1: Bodies of Water

Day	Activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Circle map
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Saltwater painting
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Sorting activity
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Venn diagram
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Quiz

Week 2: Fish

Day	Activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Circle map
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Fish collage
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Who lives where
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Sorting
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocab board activity• Quiz

The lesson plans contain a quick look at what you will do each day. There are 5 weeks in this unit.

- Week 1: bodies of water
- Week 2: fish
- Week 3: animals
- Week 4: plants
- Week 5: food chains

Day 23

Activity	Notes	Materials
Read the book: Food Chains in the water (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through the story, asking lots of questions• Continue to make connections between book and vocabulary board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book• Vocabulary board
Scavenger Hunt with vocabulary board (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paste the symbols around the room• Students walk around with their vocabulary board looking for matching symbols• Place a sticky note on their board covering the symbols as they find them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocabulary board cut apart• tape• Vocabulary board
Saltwater food chain activity review (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the food chain activity completed yesterday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed activity from yesterday
Freshwater food chains (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete the worksheets completing food chains that would occur in freshwater• There are 2 levels of difficulty included• Use color coding if needed for additional support• Make connections to the book as necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food chain activity• Scissors• Glue
Sharing (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each student shares their finished food chains with the group using the communication method of their choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed activity• Communication devices

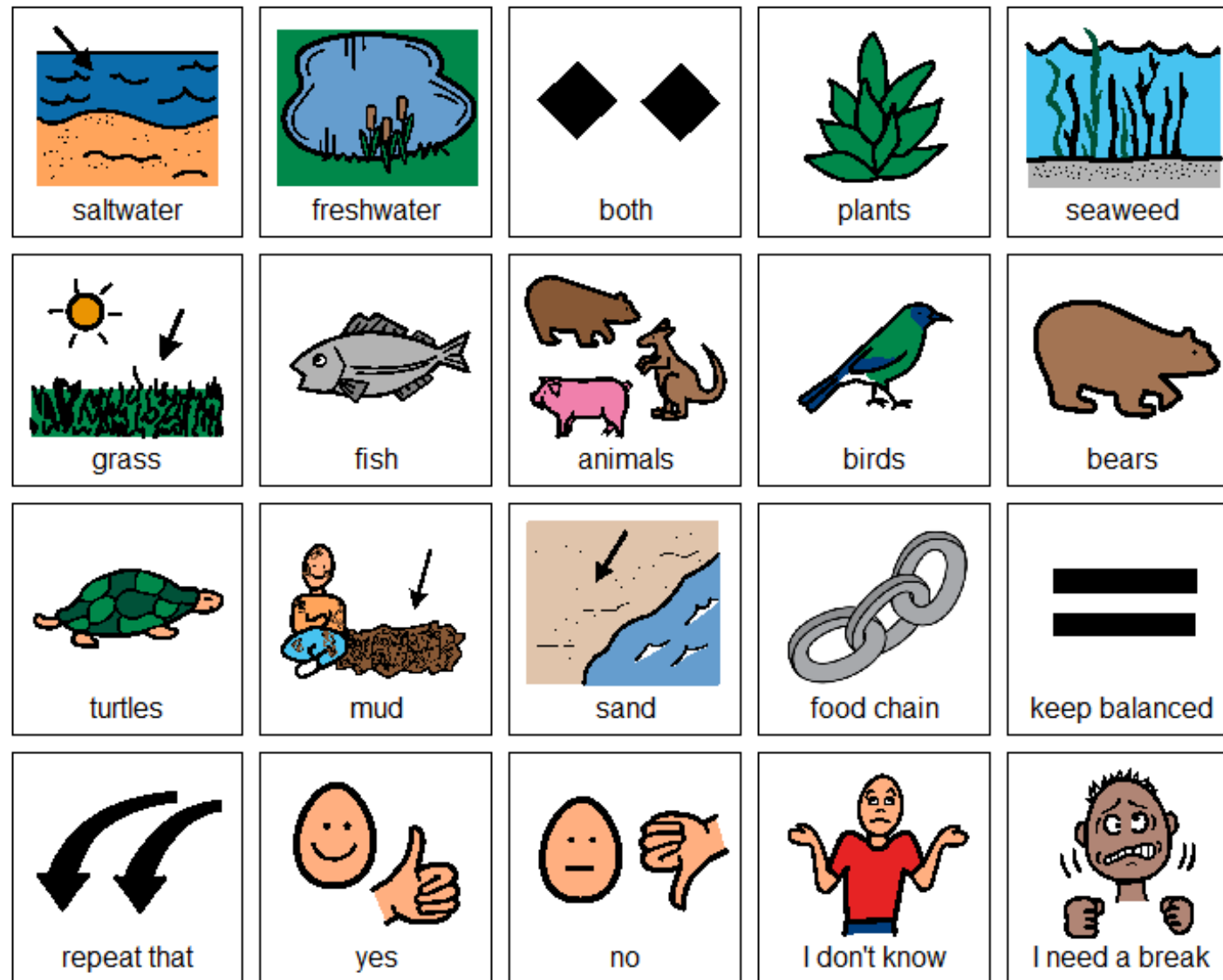
The lesson plans contain:

Detailed instructions on how that day's lesson should run

This unit comes with a vocabulary board.

Vocabulary boards are great for ALL students to assist with participation and engagement in group discussions.

Tips on how to use in the unit!!



Most lakes and rivers do not have salt in the water. This is called freshwater.



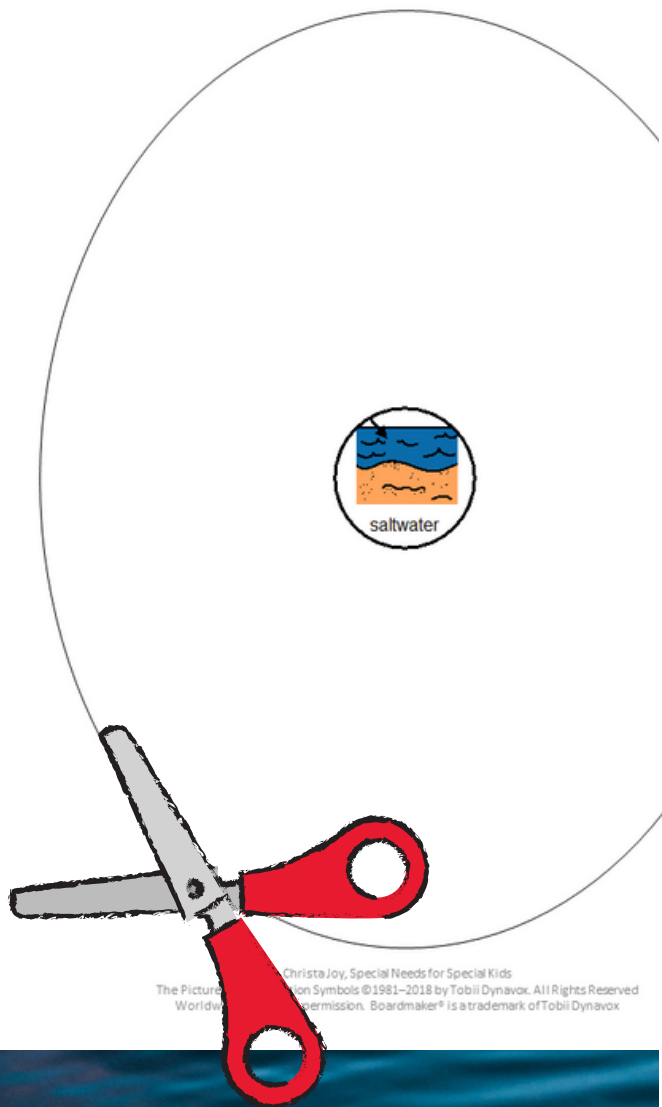
There is a new book for each week. they are between 20-30 pages, have engaging photos and simple text.

It comes in pdf version as well as a voice recorded PowerPoint (so you don't have to print it out.)



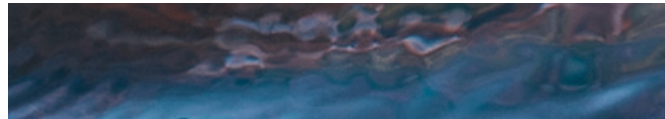
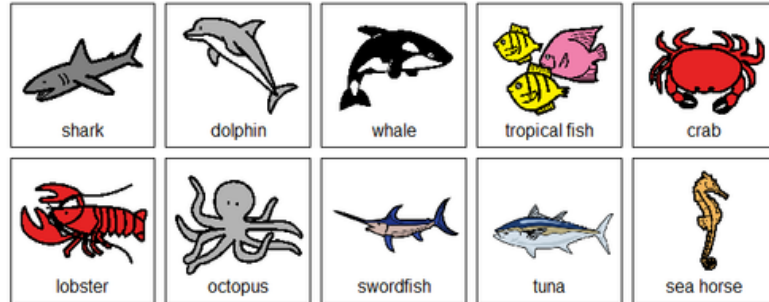
Let's look at some fish that live in the salty oceans first.



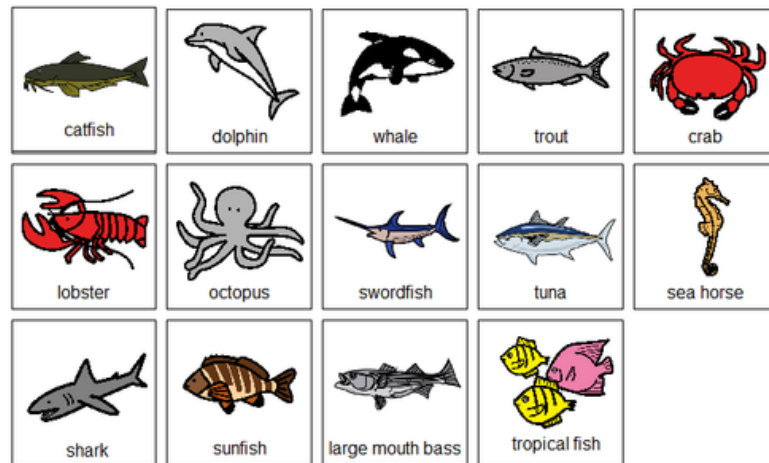


Errorless version

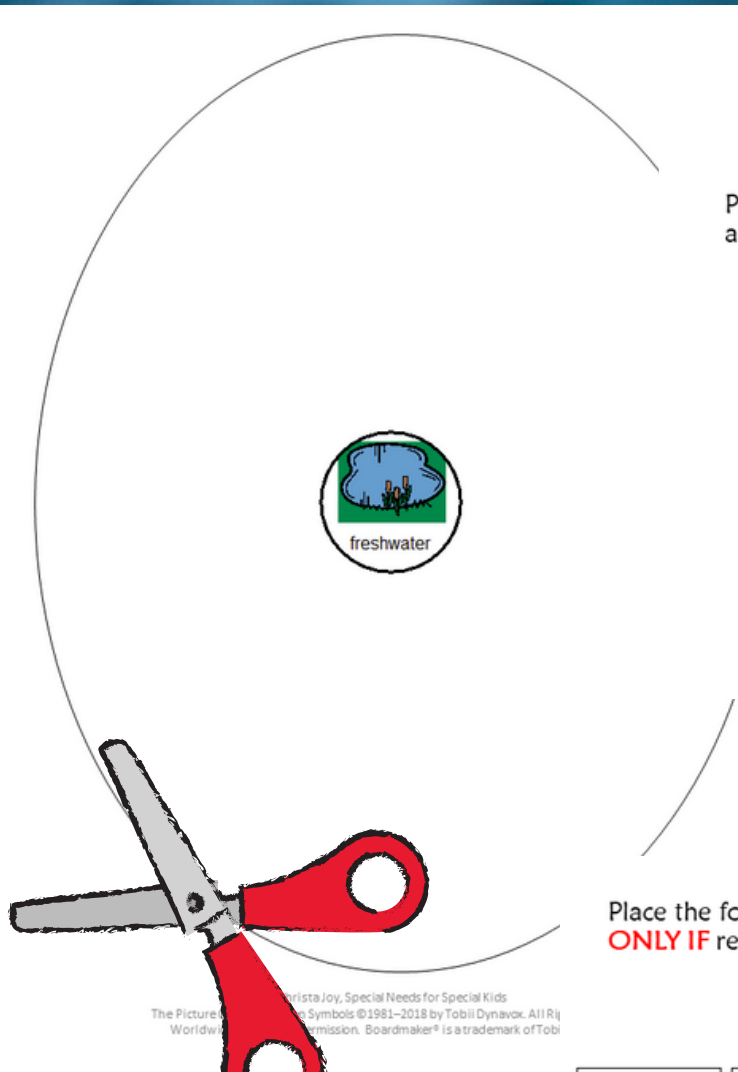
Place the following in the circle map on previous page about fish that live in saltwater.



Place the following in the circle map on previous page **ONLY IF** relates to fish that live in saltwater.

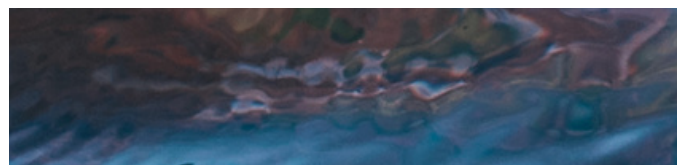
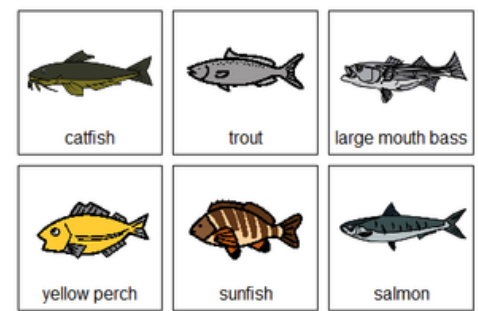


Every week students will start with a circle map about that week's topic, summarizing what is happening in saltwater and what is happening in freshwater. They come in an errorless version and a version with wrong answers mixed in.

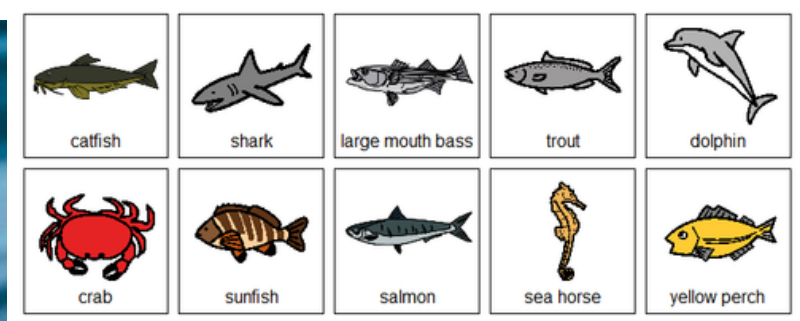


Errorless version

Place the following in the circle map on previous page about fish that live in freshwater.

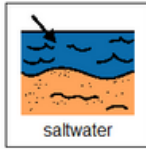


Place the following in the circle map on previous page **ONLY IF** relates to fish that live in freshwater.

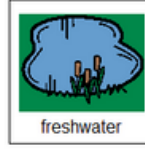


These examples are from week 2 where the focus is different types of fish that live in saltwater and freshwater.

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saltwater



freshwater

Sort the following photos into those that are saltwater and those that are freshwater. If you are not sure, place it on the center line.



stream



pond



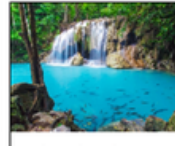
atlantic ocean



pacific ocean



lake



jungle river



lake



pond



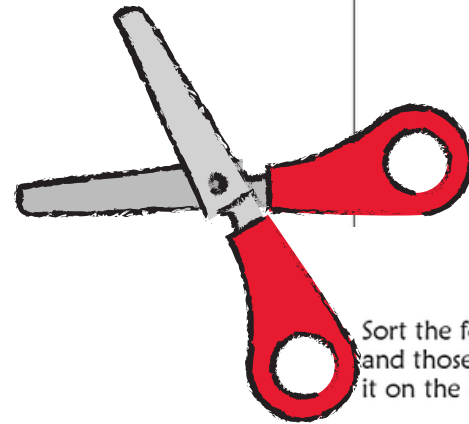
an ocean



river



pacific



Sort the following pictures into those that are saltwater and those that are freshwater. If you are not sure, place it on the center line.



arctic ocean



waterfall



Bering sea



Indian ocean



lake



Atlantic ocean



iceberg



Nile River



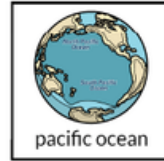
Baltic sea



river

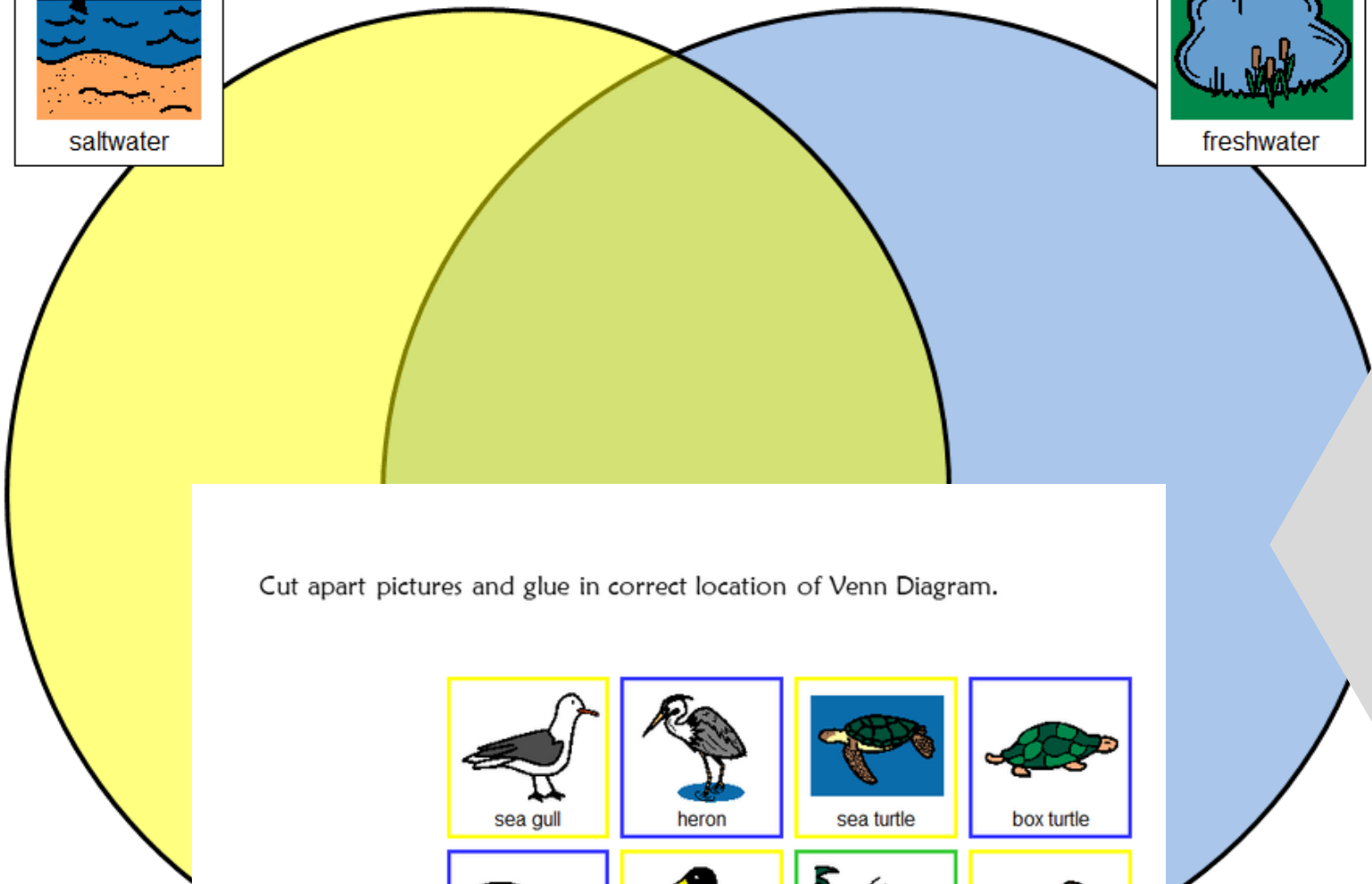
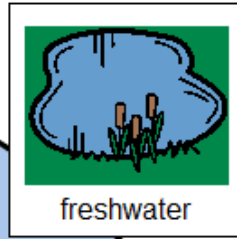
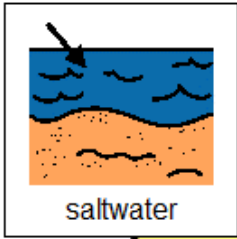


pond

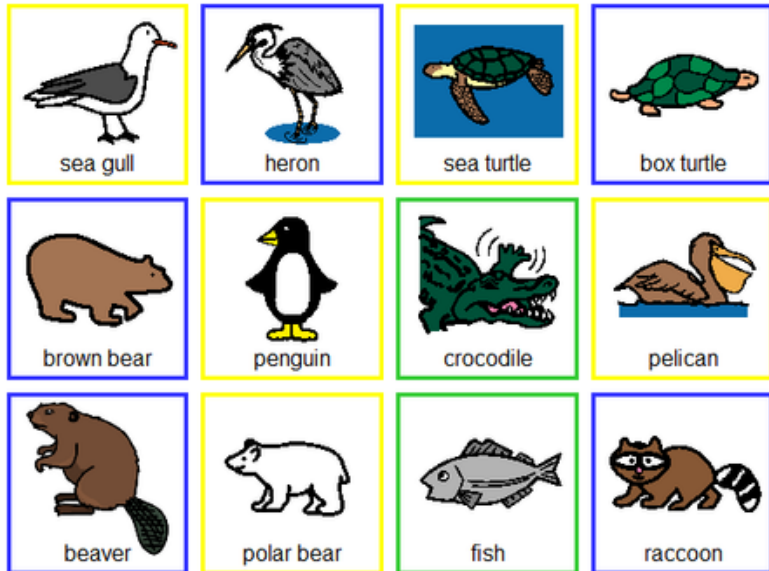


pacific ocean

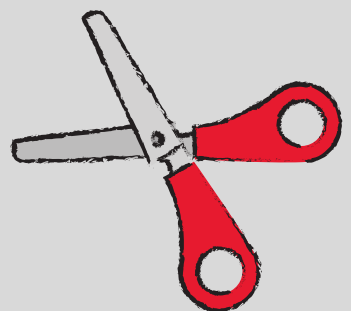
Most weeks have a sorting activity as well. They use real photos as well as picture symbols (in color and BW). You can choose which to use, or do both!! This is the example from week 1 focusing on bodies of water.



Cut apart pictures and glue in correct location of Venn Diagram.




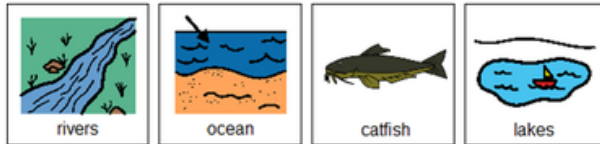
Two of the weeks also include a Venn Diagram for students to notice the similarities. This only uses picture symbols and a color-coded option is included.



A lives in  and .

A  lives in the .

A  lives in and .

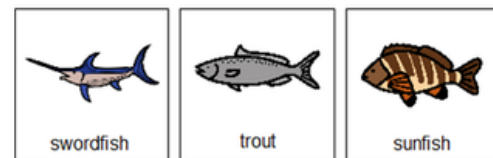


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A lives in a .

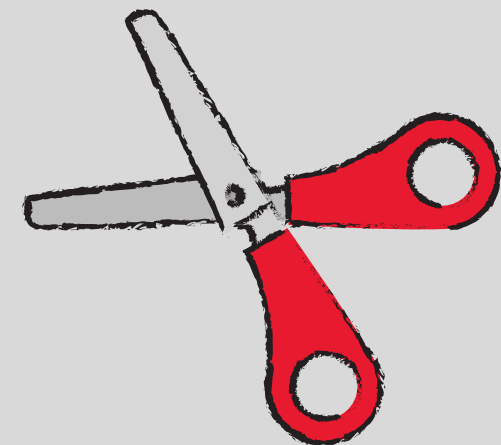
A lives in the .

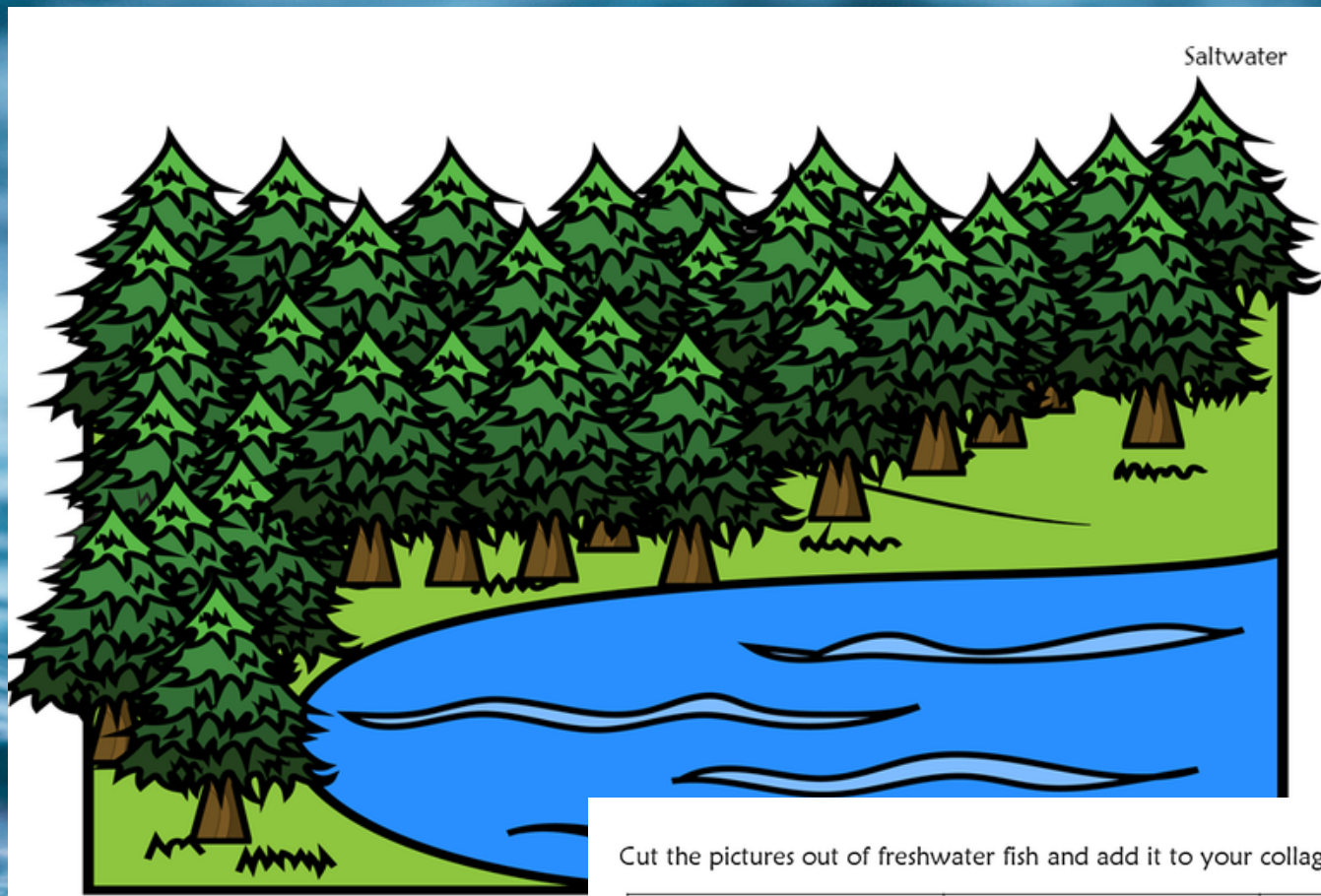
A lives in  and .



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Some of the weeks include this Where I live activity. Students look at the picture sentence and figure out what is missing.





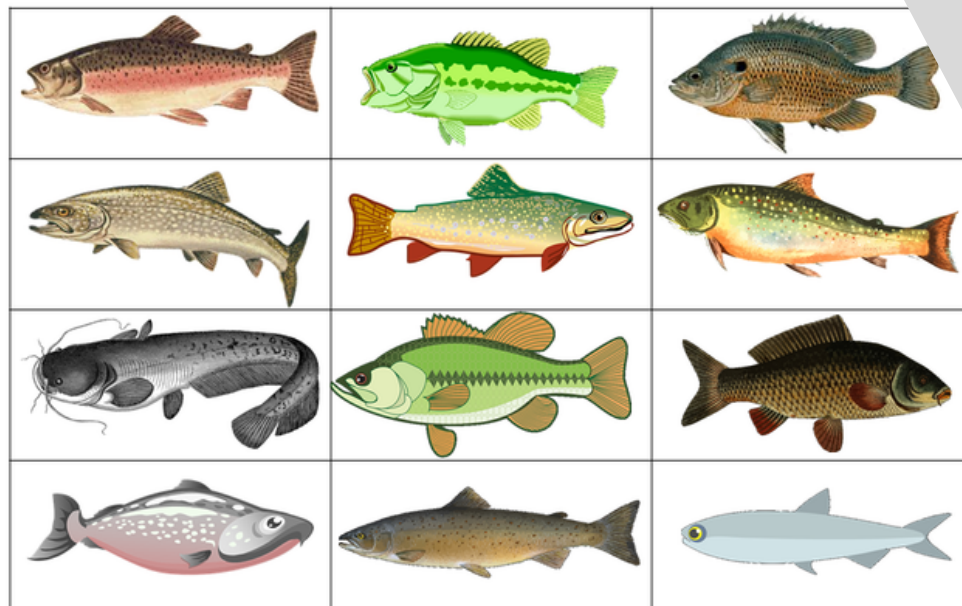
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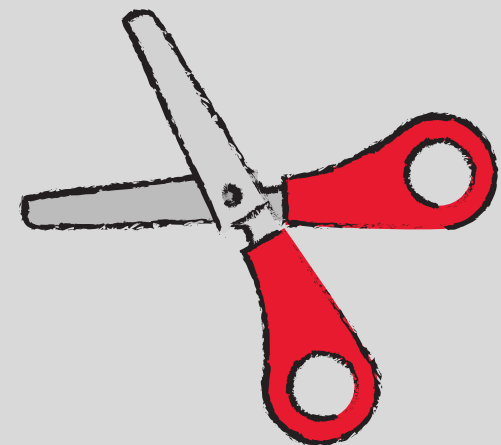
During week 2 students will complete a collage of fish. They can choose saltwater or freshwater.

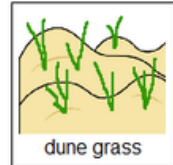
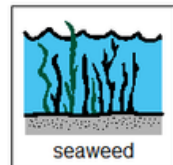
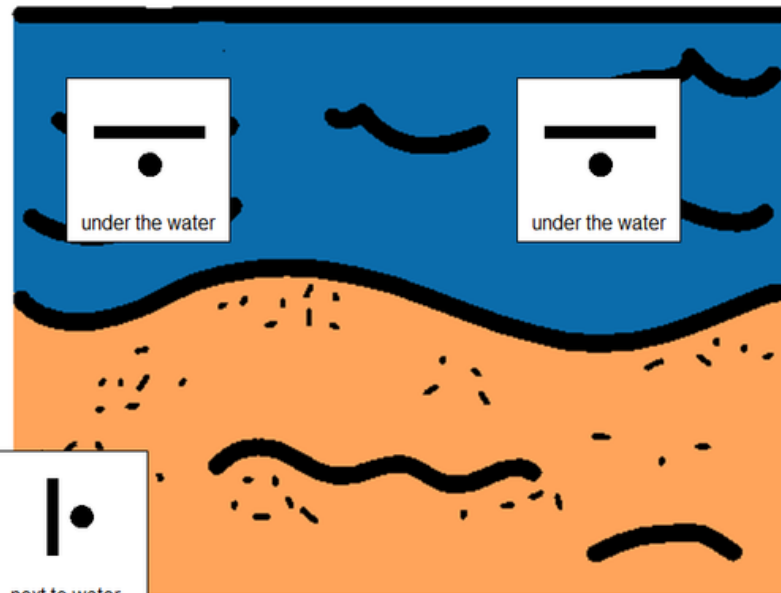
Cut the pictures out of freshwater fish and add it to your collage.

Fresh



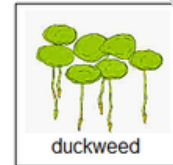
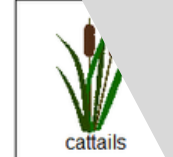
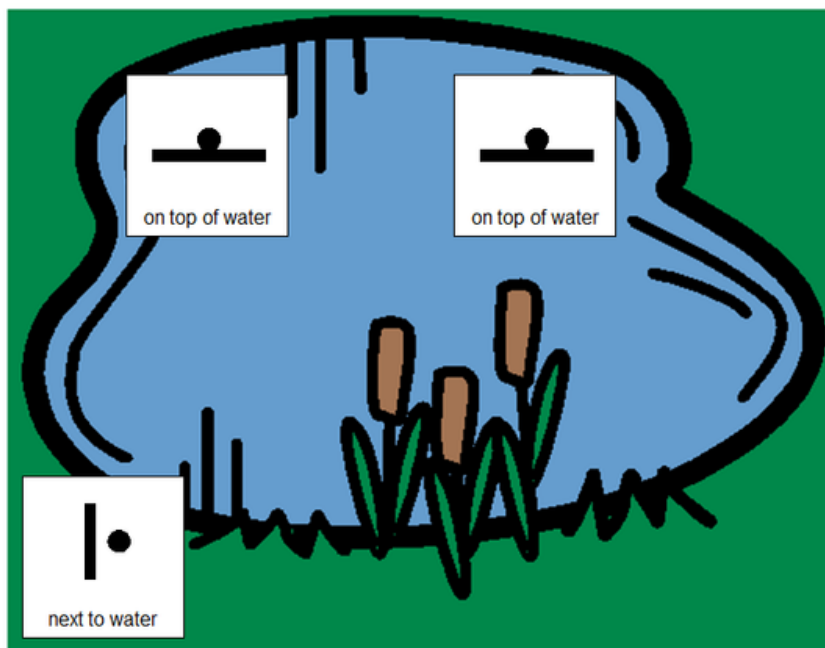
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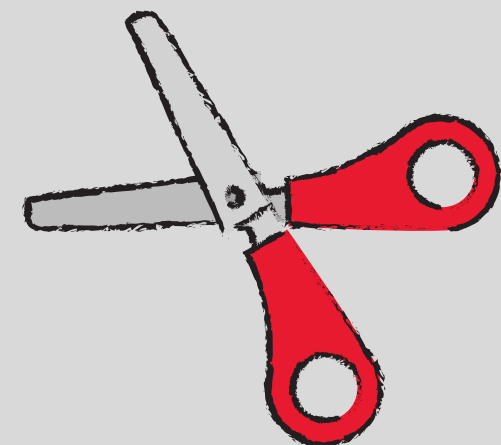


During week 4 students will complete an activity that looks at where plants grow in relation to the water and land.

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Coastal Sand Dunes



Coastal sand dunes are large mounds of sand that are found along the ocean's beaches. They are formed by the wind and sand that washes up from the waves. They serve as a natural shock absorber to the power of the ocean waves, protecting homes and other structures that are found along the edge of the beach. This is especially important during strong storms like hurricanes.

Some sand dunes are made by man using large machines in order to help keep the beach from eroding. You will see grass growing on these dunes. It is important that you **not** walk or play on these sand dunes.

Lizards and other small animals live in these dunes. They also provide a protected area for turtles to lay eggs in some regions.

Not all beaches and coastal areas have sand dunes. Next time you make a visit to the ocean, see if you can find some sand dunes. Do they have grass? Do you see any creatures living in or around them? Just remember, to **STAY OFF THE DUNES!!**

Sand Dunes

1. Where are coastal sand dunes found?



2. Sand dunes are good shock absorbers against what?



3. What animal might you see around the sand dunes?



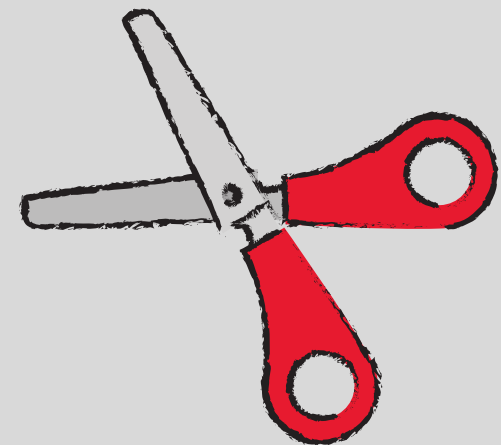
4. What often grows on the sand dunes?



5. It is okay to run and play on the sand dunes.



During week 4 students will also learn more about sand dunes and answer some questions to check their comprehension.



Food Chain Activity

Materials:

- 3 different sized Cups (several of each)
- Plant, animal, and fish pictures

Preparation:

- Attach pictures to cups making sure to attach the animals highest in the food chain to the biggest cups and those lowest in the food chain to the smallest
- Write the name of the animal, fish, or plant on the lip of the cup, see below
- You may want to color the cups, so that those that go in the freshwater climate are one color and the saltwater climate are another
- You may need to make several cups of the lower food chain plants, fish and animals.



To play:

- Arrange the cups on a table or on the floor.
 - Choose the best numbers of cups to use depending on the ability of your students. Obviously, more cups make it more difficult.
- Have each student "build" a food chain by stack 2-3 cups
- Record correct food chains on the board

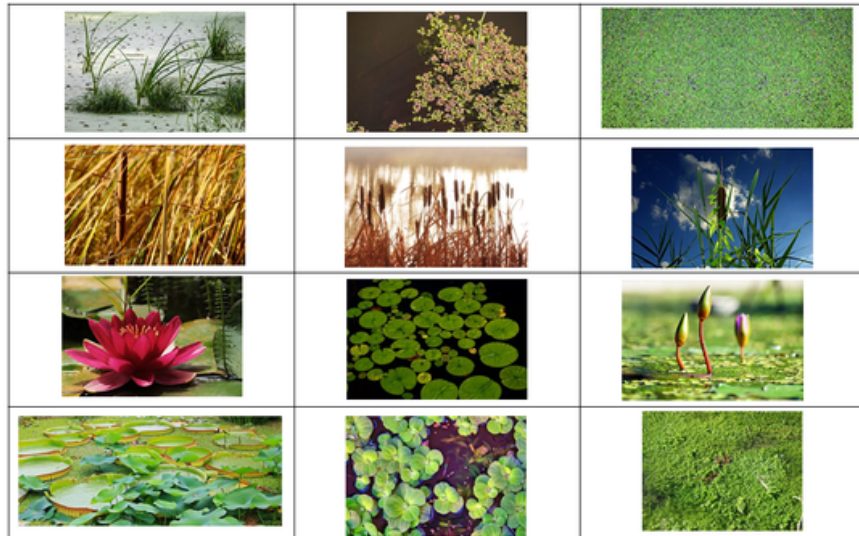
Questions to ask:

- Could some cups be in more than one food chain?
- Could some cups go in both freshwater and saltwater food chains?
- Why do you think the sizes of the cups are different? Does that help you or make it more difficult?
- What do you think would happen to some of the larger cups in the food chain if we ran out of smaller cups?

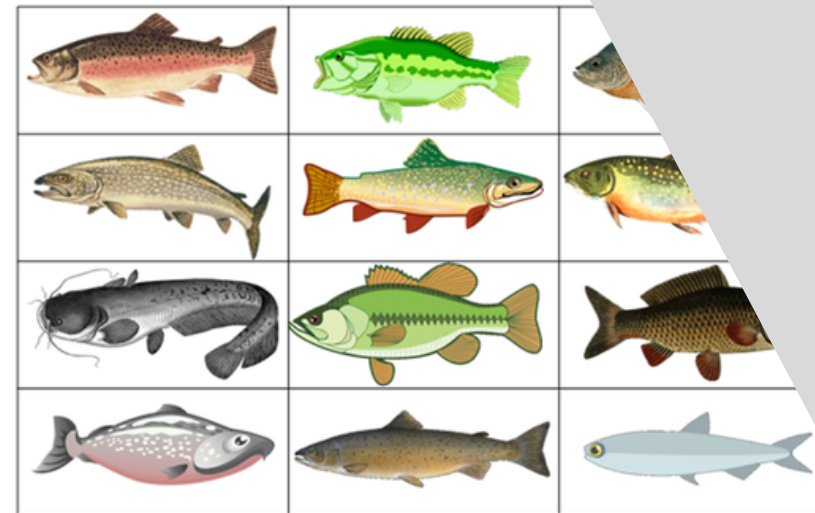
During week 5 students will do a hands-on activity stacking cups to form their own food chains.

Pictures to put on cups

freshwater


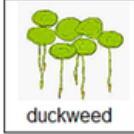

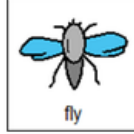



Pictures to put on cups



Level 1

Food Chains




 bear	→	<input type="text"/>	→	 duckweed
<input type="text"/>	→	 frog	→	 fly
 beaver	→	<input type="text"/>	→	<input type="text"/>

fish raccoon duckweed fish

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Level 2

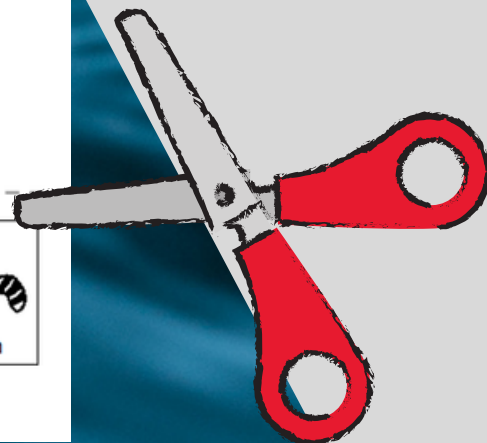
Food Chains

 heron	→	<input type="text"/>	→	<input type="text"/>
 fox	→	<input type="text"/>	→	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	→	 frog	→	<input type="text"/>


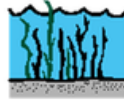





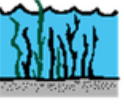

fish duckweed fish lily pad fly raccoon

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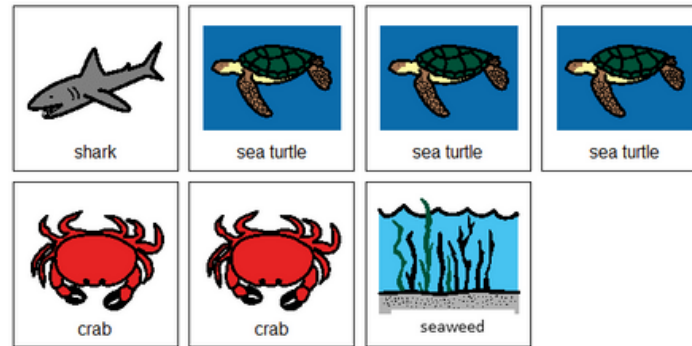
During week 5 students will also practice completing basic food chains in freshwater and saltwater. For each, there are 2 levels of difficulty included.



Ocean Life

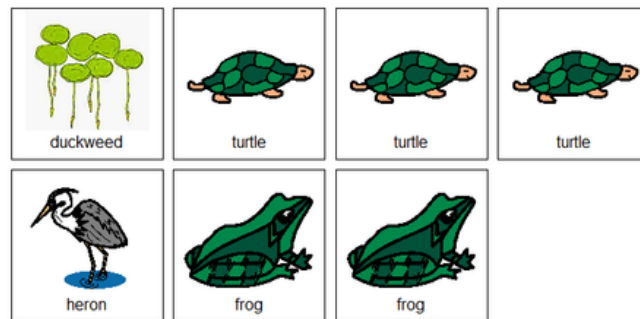
	 shark		 seaweed
 crab		 sea turtle	 shark
	 crab	 seaweed	
 seaweed		 shark	










Place the following images in the empty squares on the previous page, completing the sudoku puzzle.



Pond Life

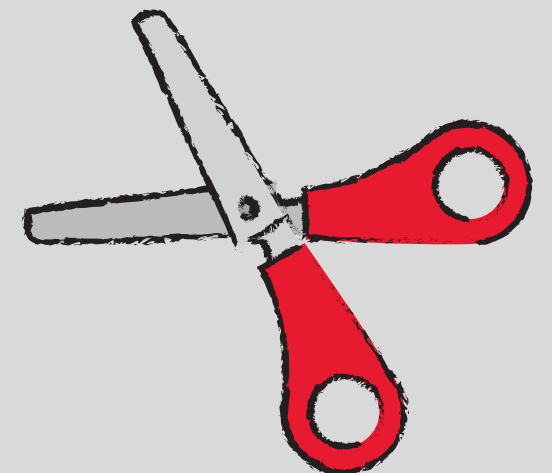
Place the following images in the empty squares on the previous page, completing the sudoku puzzle.



	 heron		 duckweed
 frog		 turtle	 heron
	 frog	 duckweed	
 duckweed		 heron	

There is a Sudoku puzzle in this unit as well.

There are 2 versions (ocean life and pond life) plus answer keys.

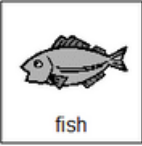


I live near a



river

I eat



fish

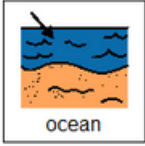
I have



fur

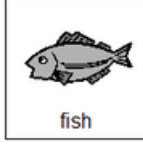
Who am I?

I live near a



ocean

I eat



fish

I like it



freezing cold

Who am I?

I live in the



ocean

can



swim

I

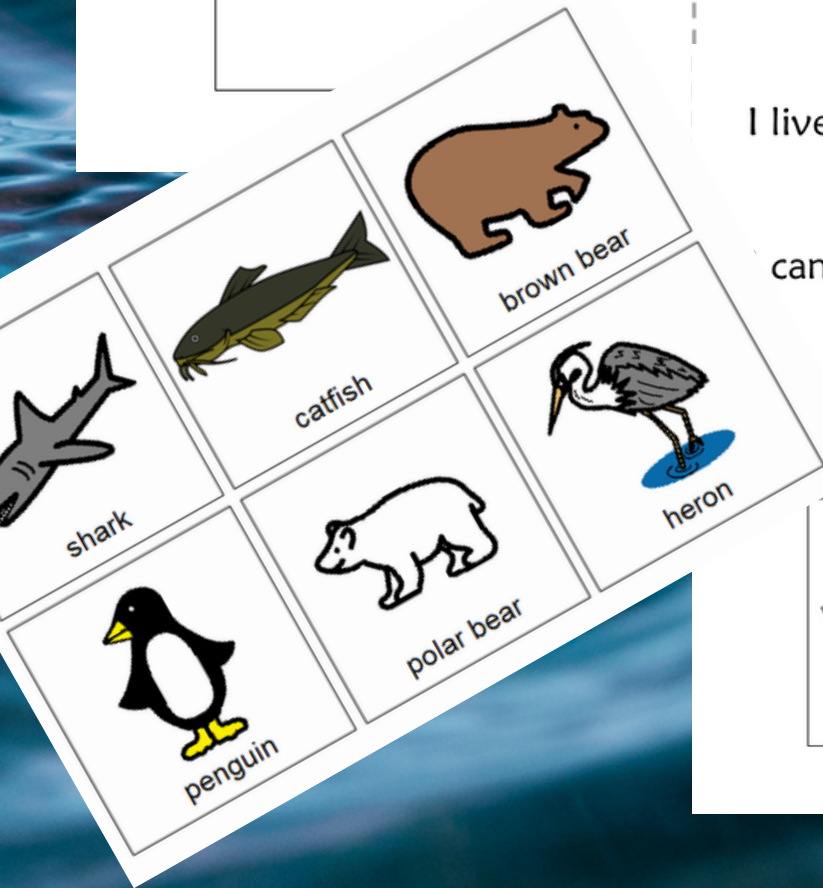
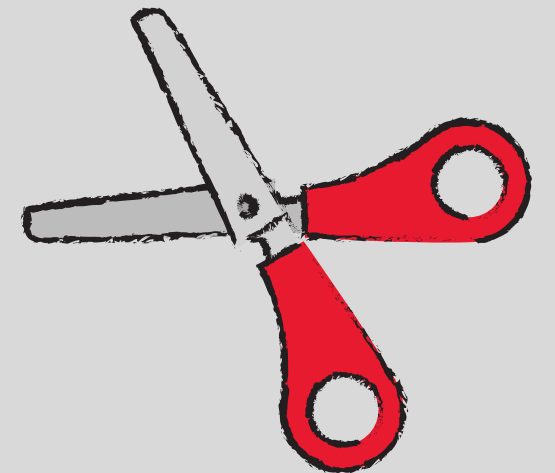


fish

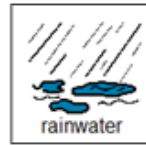
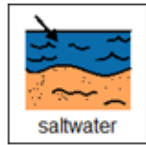
Who am I?

11 pages

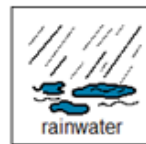
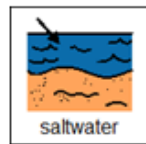
One of the last activities is a Who am I? booklet students can complete that pulls together much of the information from the unit.



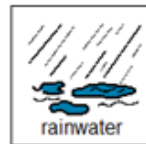
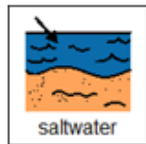
1. Most of the world is covered with what type of water?



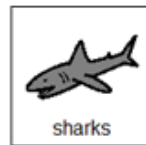
2. Rivers, lakes, and ponds are made up of what type of water?



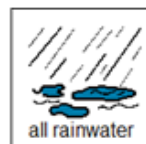
3. Which type of water do people and animals need to drink?



4. What makes the ocean water taste different?



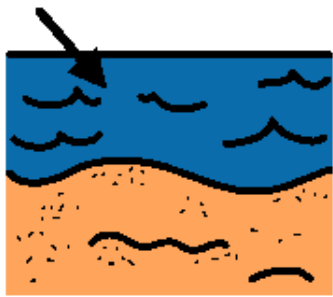
5. What is one thing that is the same for all types of water?



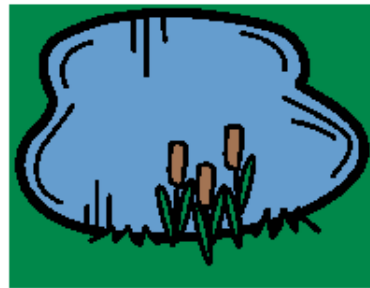
Each week ends with a 5 question quiz that comes in 3 formats. Here students circle the correct answer.

Print onto cardstock or mount on index cards. Cut pictures apart and show student answer choices for each question.

Q 1,2,3



saltwater

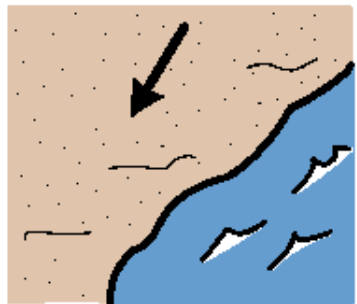


freshwater



rainwater

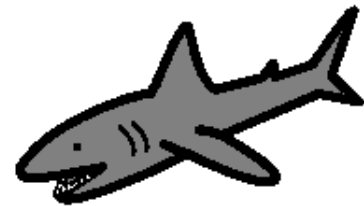
Q 4



sand



salt



sharks

With this version, you cut out the answer choices and glue them on index cards. Ask the student the question, and they point to the correct answer.

1. Most of the world is covered with what type of water?
 - a. Saltwater
 - b. Freshwater
 - c. Rainwater
2. Rivers, lakes, and ponds are made up of what type of water?
 - a. Saltwater
 - b. Freshwater
 - c. Rainwater
3. Which type of water do people and animals need to drink?
 - a. Saltwater
 - b. Freshwater
 - c. Rainwater
4. What makes the ocean water taste different?
 - a. Sand
 - b. Salt
 - c. Sharks
5. What is one thing that is the same for all types of water?
 - a. It is all salty
 - b. It is all important
 - c. It is all rainwater

This is your traditional multiple choice version. It can also be used as a recording sheet if your students are using the version with index cards.

1. Most of the water on the earth is:



2. Frogs, catfish, and duckweed live in:



3. One of the main differences between oceans and lakes is:



4. An example of plants you would find in salt water are:



5. An example of a type of fish that lives only in fresh water is:



6. Animals that have been found in freshwater and saltwater are:



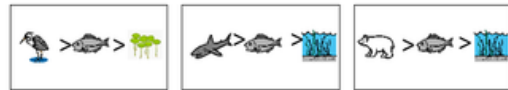
7. True or False: You can drink saltwater.



8. Which shows an example of a food chain you would find in saltwater:



9. Which shows an example of a food chain you would find in freshwater:



10. True or False? It is okay to play on the sand dunes.



There is a 10 question final assessment that covers all the information from the past 5 weeks.

There are 3 versions. This version has 10 questions with 3 picture choices for each question.

Answer key included.

Print onto cardstock or mount on index cards. Cut pictures apart and show student answer choices for each question.

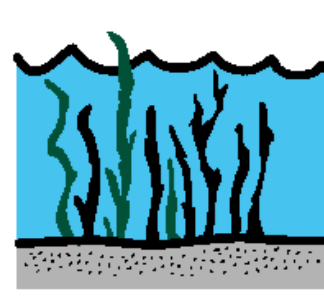
Q 4



lily pads

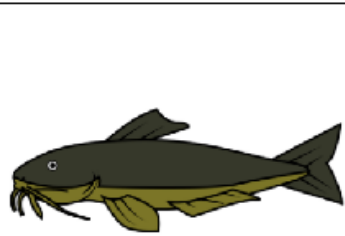


cattails



seaweed

Q 5



catfish



shark



killer whale

With this version, you cut out the answer choices and glue them on index cards. Ask the student the question, and they point to the correct answer.

1. Most of the water on the earth is:
 - A. Saltwater
 - B. Freshwater
 - C. Rainwater
2. Frogs, catfish, and duckweed live in :
 - A. Saltwater
 - B. Freshwater
 - C. Rainwater
3. One of the main differences between oceans and lakes is:
 - A. Number of fish
 - B. Number of plants
 - C. Amount of salt
4. An example of plants you would find in salt water are:
 - A. Lily pads
 - B. Cattails
 - C. seaweed
5. An example of a type of fish that lives only in fresh water is:
 - A. Catfish
 - B. Shark
 - C. Killer whale

This is your traditional multiple choice version. It can also be used as a recording sheet if your students are using the version with index cards.

Week 1

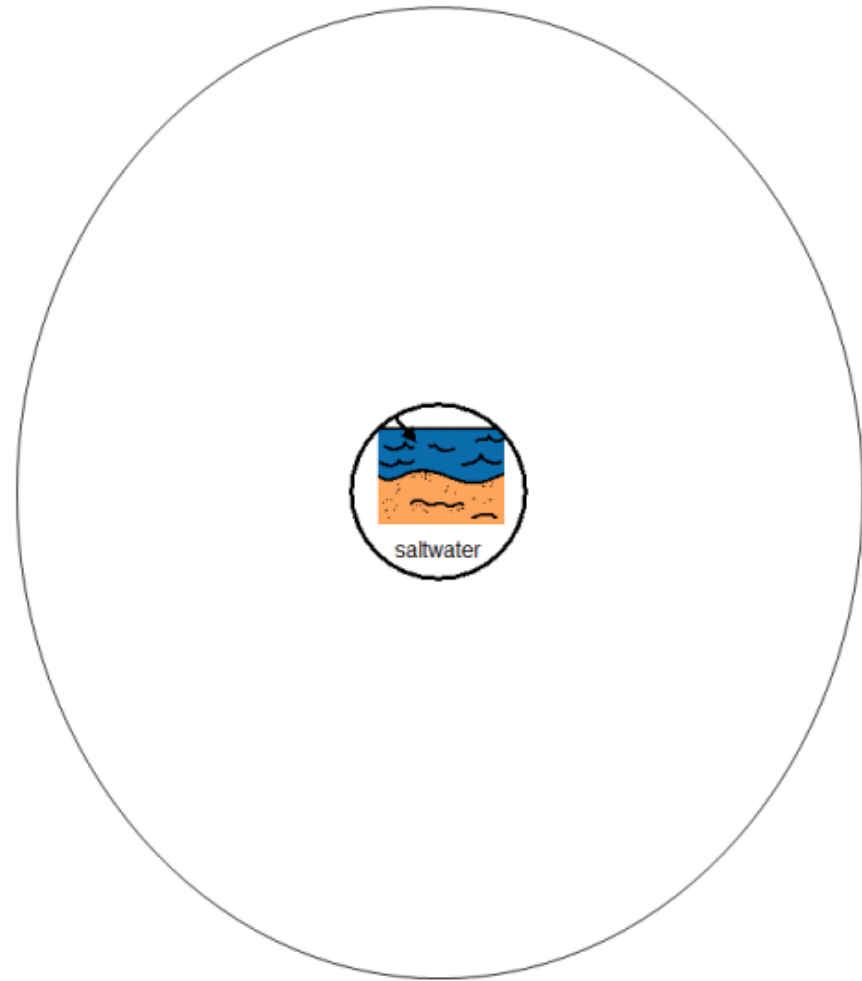
Saltwater or Freshwater

There are digital versions of the activities. They are laid out week by week to make it easier to follow.

Listen to the book:
Food Chains in the
Water



Each week starts off with
a video version of the
book.



Place pictures in circle map showing fish that live in saltwater.



Christa Joy, Special Needs for Special Kids
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Each activity is made in a click and drag format. There are two versions, with or without differentiation.

Place the pictures in the correct location on the Venn Diagram.

saltwater
 freshwater

beaver
 penguin
 heron
 polar bear

sea gull
 box turtle
 raccoon

crocodile
 sea turtle
 bear

Christa Joy, Special Needs for Special Kids
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The differentiated versions use color coding for more support and guide students where the pieces are to be moved to.



[Click Here to read more!!](#)

Finally, I realize there will be some students out there unable to do cutting activities. I have a blog post with ways to complete activities without a pair of scissors!!

Most of the activities (except the book) come in color and black and white.