



National Marine Aquarium  
**Virtual Experiences**  
**Guide**

2022-2023

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**To book, or for more information:**

Call us now on 01752 275 233 or email [learning@oceanconservationtrust.org](mailto:learning@oceanconservationtrust.org)  
[www.national-aquarium.co.uk](http://www.national-aquarium.co.uk)

# The OCT Learning Programme

## Introduction

Hello, and welcome to the Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) Learning Programme for Virtual Experiences.

OCT is a UK based conservation charity established to restore and protect the Ocean. Our work is centred around people and positive action, focusing on inspiring Ocean advocacy through connections with nature. Since 1998 we have owned and operated the National Marine Aquarium (NMA): the UK's largest aquarium, located in Britain's Ocean City, Plymouth, on the shores of the UK's first National Marine Park - Plymouth Sound. We are home to over 4,000 marine animals and are visited by around 300,000 people per year.

We believe that everyone, everywhere, is connected to the Ocean. It is our hope that you will find the activities described in this document to be valuable tools in your role as an educator, whatever subject you teach or age of your students, and look forward to working with you soon.

Sincerely,

*The National Marine Aquarium Schools Team*

## 'Ocean Literacy' for all

The Ocean is the largest living space on the planet and sustains countless plants and animals in a wide variety of habitats. Scientists all over the world are increasingly beginning to understand the role that the Ocean plays in keeping our planet, and its inhabitants alive and healthy. In fact, it is considered so important to the health of the planet that the United Nations have declared 2021 – 2030 as the 'Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development'.

### Did you know:

1. The Earth has one big Ocean with many features?
2. The Ocean and life in the Ocean shape the features of Earth?
3. The Ocean is a major influence on weather and climate?
4. The Ocean makes the Earth habitable?
5. The Ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems?
6. The Ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected?
7. The Ocean is largely unexplored?

The seven statements above are known as the '**Ocean Literacy Principles**'. These seven principles, along with the more detailed breakdowns of each are considered the foundation of an...

***"Understanding of the Ocean's influence on us, and our influence on the Ocean"***

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## **Virtual Learning with the National Marine Aquarium**

Our Virtual Learning programme has been created to deliver the same high quality, industry leading standards of curriculum-linked education as our Aquarium Visits programme, without the complications of leaving the classroom. Our Virtual Learning experiences are available to student groups of any age, from EYFS through to university students. Multiple classes can join our experiences from different classrooms, and students are also welcome to join from home.

### **Activity Options**

#### **Virtual Tours** *(from £120.00 per tour)*

Let us take your pupils on an immersive under-water adventure as they journey across the world's Ocean from the comfort of their own classrooms! Each tour is led by one of our Schools Officers, who will virtually guide your students around the exhibits, highlighting links to key stage specific curriculum topics and requested topics of interest.

You can choose from:

- Enchanted Seas (KS1) Pupils will be taken on a magical journey in search of their favourite Ocean animals. Expect movement, games, and fun! *See p7\* for a full overview.*
- Beneath the Waves (KS2) On this immersive underwater adventure, students will learn about classification, adaptations, and evolution of sea-creatures. *See p7 for a full overview.*
- Changing Seas (KS3+) Students will learn about the role sea-creatures play in the marine world, threats to their Ocean home, and how we can protect it. *See p8 for a full overview.*

#### **Included in the experience:**

- Downloadable content: 4 post-tour activities, aimed at different key stages, plus a 'Sea Spotters' sheet for younger audiences to use throughout the tour.
- Flexible session dates/times (between 9am and 5pm, Monday-Friday, during term-time)
- Your own personal guide for 120 minutes.
- Exclusive virtual access to all Aquarium exhibits.

Your journey will begin in our Plymouth Sound exhibit, where students will encounter some of our much loved, and most charismatic local life around the British Coasts. After this, they will move on to the largest tank in the whole of the United Kingdom – our Atlantic Ocean exhibit. Here, they will get a close-up look at our turtle, stingrays, and sharks. The tour will continue onto our Blue Planet area, where they will meet a wide variety of beautiful creatures that can be found in coral reefs across the world. To find out more about our Aquarium exhibits, click [here](#).




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## Virtual Workshops *(from £60 per workshop)*

Our fully interactive workshops bring all the excitement and learning of the National Marine Aquarium directly into the classroom. One of our Schools Officers (or mermaids!) will lead your students through a Virtual Workshop of your choice, each with a particular topic focus and format depending on the key stage of your students. These can be further fine-tuned to the needs of your group as part of the booking process.

You can choose from:

- Meet the Mermaid (EYFS/KS1) Meet Marina the Mermaid in her magical cave, as she teaches your students all about life under the sea. *See 8 for a full overview.*
- Under the Knife (KS2/3) Students will learn all about squid adaptations and anatomy in this interactive dissection workshop. *See p9 for a full overview.*
- Underwater Evolution (KS2/3) Students will play a game in which they create their own sea creature, all whilst learning about the process of evolution. *See p9 for a full overview.*

### Included in the experience:

- Exclusive downloadable content: each workshop comes with teacher notes and with the printable resources you will need for your session.
- Flexible session dates/times (between 9am and 5pm, Monday-Friday, during term-time)
- An Ocean expert delivering your interactive workshop in one of our dedicated Learning spaces.

### Workshop Spaces:

Our OCT Learning Programme operates from a dedicated Learning Centre within the Aquarium, capable of accommodating up to 200 students at any one time. The Learning Centre is split into several sub-spaces each with a specific function and set of resources. Our Virtual Workshops take place in the following spaces:

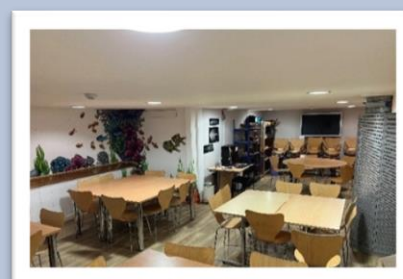
#### Aqualab

The Aqualab is a fully seated science classroom that can accommodate groups of up to 33 students at a time. It includes an Audio-Visual suite, video projection, and is home to our science experiments and lab-based investigations.



#### Coral Reef Room

The Coral Reef Room is a self-contained classroom which can seat up to 35 people at a time. With a single wall mounted screen, this versatile space is used for cross-curricular workshops, our Meet the Mermaid session, and live broadcasts.




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## Activity Selection

Our Virtual Experiences have been developed to give students a ‘deep dive’ on a wide range of topics linked to the Ocean. Reviewed and updated annually, our activity selection reflects many of the most current themes in the field of Ocean Conservation including Ocean Literacy, marine citizenship, and development of Pro-Ocean Behaviour. Each activity has also been closely linked to the National Curriculum in England.

### Key Stage Matrix

This table displays the activities according to their target key stage. Click on the name of any session name to be taken directly its activity description for further information about what is involved. For the full Programmes of Study, please contact our Schools Administrator at [learning@oceanconservationtrust.org](mailto:learning@oceanconservationtrust.org), or call us on 01752 275233.

Activities		EYFS	Key Stage One		Key Stage Two				Key Stage Three			Key Stage Four
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10+
Virtual Tours	Enchanted Seas											
	Beneath the Waves											
	Changing Seas											
Virtual Workshops	Virtual Mermaid											
	Virtual Dissection											
	Virtual Evolution											

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## Enchanted Seas Tour (KS1)

✓  
Science

Tech

✓  
English

Art

Maths

✓  
Humanities

5  
O.L. Principle

### Session Overview:

Take your pupils on an interactive underwater adventure as they virtually explore the Aquarium in search of their favourite Ocean animals! Your own personal tour guide will reveal a range of fascinating, weird and wonderful facts about our sea-creatures, answering any questions your students might have along the way. Pupils will be encouraged to actively engage with the tour, getting involved physically by acting out some of their favourite animals and playing guessing games with their guide!



### Common Topics and Themes:

- Shapes, colours, patterns
- Classification
- Food chains
- Camouflage
- Habitats
- Species ID
- Body form and function
- Lifecycles
- Pollution

## Beneath the Waves Tour (KS2)

✓  
Science

Tech

✓  
English

Art

Maths

✓  
Humanities

5  
O.L. Principle

### Session Overview:

During this immersive underwater adventure, students will identify the adaptations of a variety of Ocean creatures across a range of habitats and discover predator-prey interactions between different species. Their own personal guide will also cover classification, the importance of our Ocean, how humans are having an impact, and what we can do to protect it. Students will also have plenty of opportunities to ask all the questions they've ever wanted to know about marine animals and life at the aquarium!



### Common Topics and Themes:

- Habitats
- Classification
- Overfishing
- Adaptations
- Species ID
- Pollution
- Evolution
- Food Chains
- Climate Change

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## Changing Seas Tour (KS3+)

✓  
Science

Tech

✓  
English

Art

Maths

✓  
Humanities

5  
O.L. Principle

### Session Overview:

In Changing Seas, your pupils will learn about how we look after the 4,000 animals housed at the National Marine Aquarium. They will start to understand more about how these animals have evolved to best suit their environments, and the important roles they play in the marine world. Students will be encouraged to discuss some important issues facing the Ocean and consider the ways in which our actions, as individuals and as a community, can have a positive impact.



### Common Topics and Themes:

- Renewable Energy
- Marine Protected Areas
- Habitat Restoration
- Evolution
- Reproduction
- Classification
- Ecosystems
- Food chains/webs
- Interdependence

## Meet the Mermaid Workshop (EYFS/KS1)

✓  
Science

Tech

✓  
English

Art

✓  
Maths

✓  
Humanities

5  
O.L. Principle

### Session Overview:

During this magical introduction to the underwater world, your children will virtually meet one of our resident mermaids in her mermaid cave! She will show the children a range of incredible Ocean artefacts, such as shells and mermaid's purses, and share some weird and wonderful facts about her Ocean friends before reading them a tale. Each story provides a gentle and positive introduction to Ocean threats and conservation, and links to the EYFS Framework and KS1 Science curriculum. *See p.10 for story options.*



**Learning Outcomes:** (Following this session your students will be able to...)

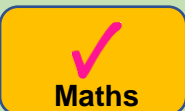
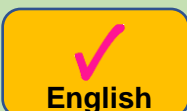
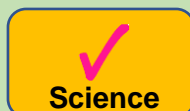
1. Recognise the key features of different sea creatures.
2. Identify objects from the Ocean and the animals they came from.
3. Anticipate what will happen in a story that is read to them.

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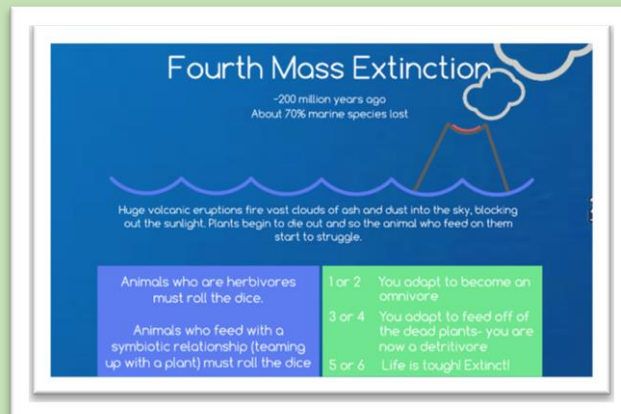


## Evolution Workshop (KS2)



### Session Overview:

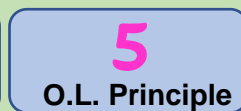
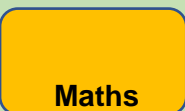
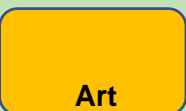
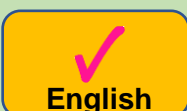
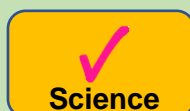
The best learning is fun learning, and this workshop is one of our most enjoyable for teachers and students alike. The session begins with a simple introduction to essential evolution-linked terminology, including adaptation, inheritance, variation, and natural selection. Participants will then go on a journey from the origins of life on earth all the way through to the modern age. Pencils and dice in hand, students will track and document the evolution of their own single celled organisms, but who will make it to the modern age, and what new challenges await in an uncertain future?



### Learning Outcomes: (Following this session your students will be able to...)

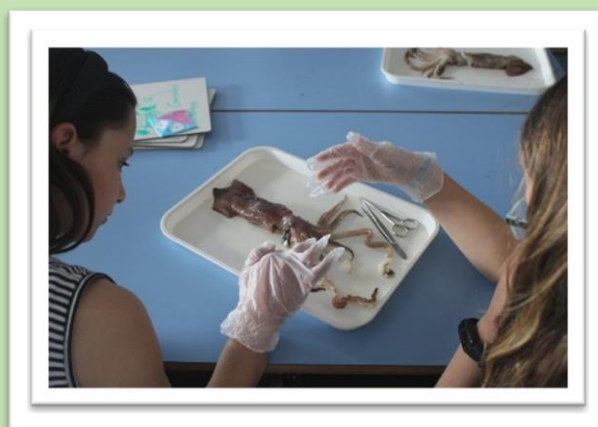
1. Define key terminology used in the study of evolution.
2. Explain the process of natural selection and how it drives evolution.
3. Talk about how environmental change poses a threat to species in the Ocean.

## Under the Knife Workshop (KS3)



### Session Overview:

This guided dissection workshop gives students an opportunity to gain an in depth understanding of the biology, anatomy, and behaviour of a squid. The students will watch a live dissection, using the classroom resources provided to enhance their learning. Through a process of sequential dissection, observation and comparison, students will identify organs widely found across the animal kingdom and explore the role and function of a range of features unique to cephalopods.



### Learning Outcomes: (Following this session your students will be able to...)

1. Recognise the moral implications of carrying out a dissection.
2. Identify key anatomical features of a squid and compare to humans.
3. Locate and explain the function of the respiratory, circulatory, and digestive systems.

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## Mermaid Tales

Our 'Mermaid Tales' stories have been written by one of our Schools Officers, who is a qualified Primary School teacher. Each story is around 15 minutes long and constructed entirely through rhyming couplets. As part of your booking, we'll ask you to select a story from the table below.

Title	Description	Topics
<b>Hulk's New Home</b>	A hermit crab embarks on a mission across the beach to find himself a new home, finding friends in need of help along the way.	Materials, pollution, habitats (rockpools/beach) body form & function
<b>Am I A Dragon?</b>	As a confused sea creature tries to find out what kind of animal she is, her friends teach her all about the variety of life under the sea.	Classification, habitats (kelp/seagrass/sand) body form & function
<b>Something's Not Quite Right</b>	After discovering their coral reef home is in trouble, a group of sea creatures go on an adventure to find a new place to live.	Climate change, habitats (coral reefs) predators/prey, colours & patterns
<b>What A Mystery!</b>	A sperm whale comes across a mysterious object drifting through the Ocean and tries to discover what it is with the help of her deep-sea friends.	Habitats (deep/shipwrecks) body form & function, pollution
<b>A Toothy Tale</b>	A lost whale shark attempts to find the owner of a shark tooth and learns a lot about the similarities and differences between sharks along the way.	Dentition/feeding, fishing, predators/prey, body form & function, habitats (open ocean/sand)
<b>What's That Sound?</b>	A dolphin attempts to discover the source of a mysterious noise, and in doing so learns about the weird and wonderful ways that animals use sound under the sea.	Senses, habitats (seagrass/mangroves/corals) body form & function, noise pollution
<b>The Unusual Unicorn</b>	A mother narwhal leaves the pod to search for her lost son, finding a range of arctic creatures in need of help during her journey.	Lifecycles, habitats (polar) body form & function, pollution

*Please note, that for nursery aged pupils, these stories are not suitable. In this instance, the Mermaid will choose an age-appropriate story to read to the children.*

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## Price list

This price list is correct as of February 2023 and reflects the programme prices for the academic year 2022-2023. Please check our website ([www.national-aquarium.co.uk](http://www.national-aquarium.co.uk)) for the latest prices, deals and special offers available for schools.

Activity option	Cost <i>(All prices are inclusive of VAT)</i>
<p><b>Virtual Tour</b> <i>(Choose from...)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Beneath the Waves</i></li> <li>• <i>Changing Seas</i></li> <li>• <i>Enchanted Seas</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £120 for a class up to 32 students</li> <li>• £60 per additional class</li> </ul>
<p><b>Virtual Workshop</b> <i>(Choose from...)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Virtual Dissection</i></li> <li>• <i>Virtual Evolution</i></li> <li>• <i>Virtual Mermaid</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £120 for a class up to 32 students</li> <li>• £60 per additional class</li> <li>• £120 for a class up to 32 students</li> <li>• £60 per additional class</li> <li>• £60 for a class up to 32 students</li> <li>• £30 per additional class</li> </ul>

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## Preparing for your Virtual Experience

You'll need access to a computer with a webcam and microphone - one in each room your students will be connecting from. Don't worry if you've not done this before, or you're not confident with the setup. Our Schools Officers can help with the technical arrangements - please contact us should you wish for some guidance and support.

Please ensure all resources you intend to use during the session are printed and ready to be used.

You might like to consider creating a list of questions for the students to ask before your session commences.

## Booking your Virtual Experience

To book, just call us on 01752 275233 or email us at [learning@oceanconservationtrust.org](mailto:learning@oceanconservationtrust.org).

Our Schools Administrator will talk you through your options and answer any questions you may have. You will need to let us know:

- Your preferred tour or workshop
- Your preferred date/time. If we don't have availability on your preferred date and time, we will offer you a suitable alternative
- No. of students/classes participating
- Year Group of students
- Preferred platform. We prioritise Zoom and Microsoft Teams, but if you require a different platform, we'll be happy to investigate an alternative delivery for you.

Once this information is confirmed, you will receive a Booking Pack, which will outline the details of your session. You will need to check the document through and complete the relevant sections before returning it to us. Once we have received your completed forms, your booking will be confirmed.

**Please note that the link to your virtual experience will be found in this document, along with the unique code on your booking enquiry form to access the exclusive resources associated with your Virtual Learning activity.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

**We will happily arrange test-run before the date of your tour, to ensure that you don't experience any technical issues on the day!**

To arrange, please get in touch with us so we can schedule a suitable date and time.

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## Accessing your Virtual Experience

Please click on the weblink in your booking pack to access the session. Once in, you will find yourself in the waiting room. Our Schools Officer will then allow you to enter the session.

We recommend joining the session a few minutes early to discuss any final points with your Schools Officer before they begin the session with your students.

## Amending & Cancelling your Virtual Experience

**Booking Amendments:** If you would like to make any amendments to your booking, such as session time or activity choice, please tell us as far in advance as possible.

**Booking Cancellation:** Please let us know as soon as you can if you wish to cancel your booking. We require 7 days' notice of cancellation or significant alteration to the agreed programme. A £50 cancellation fee may be charged if insufficient notice is provided.

## Safety Notes

### **Safeguarding & Risk Assessment**

As with our Aquarium Visits and Outreach for Schools offerings, our Virtual Programme has been fully risk assessed and incorporated into our safeguarding policy. These documents are available upon request should they be of use to you in your lesson planning.

### **Shareable links & home connections**

We provide you with a single, shareable link for the session. By agreement with our booking team, we can facilitate students connecting from home so last-minute absence doesn't have to mean missing out.

### **Private connections**

Your Virtual Experience booking is just for you - no other schools will be able to join the session, so the content can be tailored to suit your exact needs.

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