

Why do oceans matter? | Geography | Years 5 & 6 | Spring Term 2025-26

National Curriculum – Geography

Locational knowledge

- Locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on Europe (including the location of Russia) and North and South America, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities.
- Identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, Arctic and Antarctic Circle, the Prime / Greenwich Meridian and time zones (including day and night).

Human and physical geography

- Describe and understand key aspects of:
 - physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle.
 - human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.

Geographical skills and fieldwork

- Use maps, atlases, globes and digital / computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied.

Lines of enquiry

Why are oceans important?

- They are used for trading between countries.
- Ocean currents influence our weather.
- They provide food and jobs.
- They are used for fun, recreational activities.
- They give us ingredients for medicine.
- They absorb carbon dioxide and warm our planet.
- Coral reefs act as a buffer to natural disasters.
- Coral reefs are home to a quarter of our marine species.



How can we support a healthy ocean?

- Try to avoid buying single-use plastics.
- Recycle any plastics where possible.
- Only buy what you need.
- Buy second-hand where possible.
- Re-use or re-purpose items to give them 'second-life'.
- Teach others about the ocean, its importance and its uses.
- Only buy the seafood you need.
- Try to use natural fertilisers in gardens.
- Walk or cycle if you can.



Vocabulary

Ocean current: the movement of a large area of seawater driven by the wind, gravity and water density.

Coral reef: a large rock structure in the ocean formed by corals..

Coral bleaching: a process which turns coral white, losing its colour.

Marine: relating to the ocean.

Threat: something likely to cause damage.

Microplastics: tiny pieces of plastic created from plastic waste.

Acidification: the process of making something acidic.

Overfishing: the number of fish decreases as a result of extreme amounts of fishing.

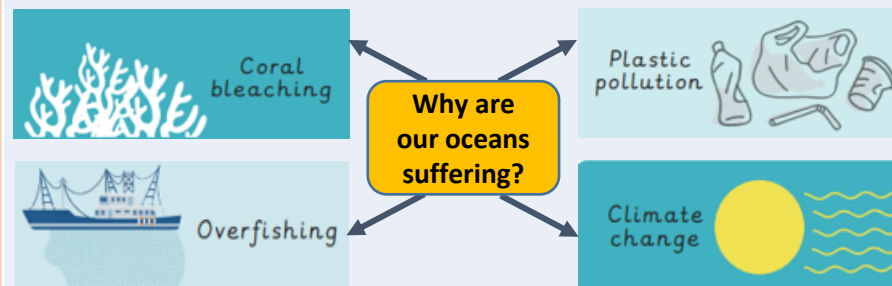
Biodegradable: when something naturally breaks down and returns to nature.

Human footprint: the relationship between human consumption and the resources our planet can supply.

Single-use plastic: plastic only used once and then thrown away.

Erosion: when something is worn away.

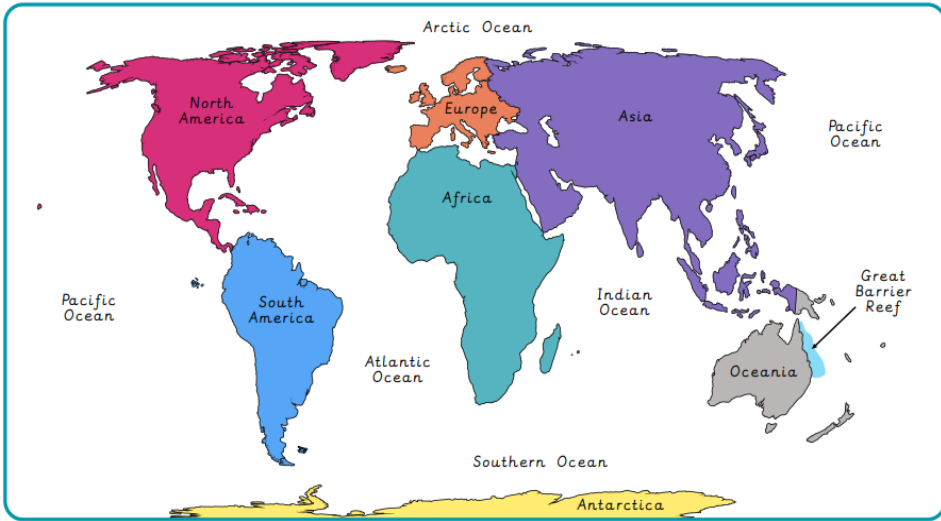
Ecosystem: the relationship between living things and the environment.



Geographical skills and knowledge

Where are the oceans of the world?

- There are 5 oceans (huge body of salt water) on the Earth: Arctic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Southern Ocean.



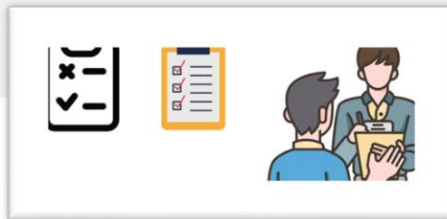
Where is the Great Barrier Reef?

- The Great Barrier Reef is located in the Pacific Ocean off the northeastern coast of Australia. It extends for over 2300km.



- It is also a UNESCO World Heritage site, known for its remarkable biodiversity.

Qualitative data - **non-numeric information**, such as interviews, diaries, answers to open-ended survey questions, audio-visual recordings and images. A **Likert Scale** can be used to collect information about people views of an area.





Quantitative data - **data that is described in numbers**. This type of data can be counted or measured. Tally charts and close-ended questionnaires can be used to collect numerical information about an area.



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Key Learning: To explore the importance of our oceans and how they have changed over time.

- 1 How do we use our oceans?**
Recall prior learning about the water cycle, different bodies of water, and global warming. Explain that oceans are a key part of our water cycle and impact our lives in many ways. Explain that many countries trade with each other by sending produce across the ocean on ships. Show video 'Our Ocean: Big Blue Buddy'. Create a mind map showing all the different ways the ocean is important, then write a summary paragraph.
- 2 What is the Great Barrier Reef?**
Locate Australia on a map and identifying its physical and human features. Research the benefits and threats to the Great Barrier Reef. Write a paragraph to present findings.
-  **3 Why are our oceans suffering?**
Interpret thematic maps about coral reefs and oceans. Explain the ways human activity is changing our marine environments, including coral bleaching, plastic pollution, overfishing and climate change. Describe how humans will be impacted by changing ocean conditions. Write a paragraph to summarise key learning.
-  **4 What can we do to help our oceans?**
Explain to the pupils that although our oceans are under threat, actions are being taken to keep them healthy. Watch video: 'Marine life being saved in the ocean'. Discuss ideas about actions we can take to help support our oceans. Introduce enquiry question: 'How littered is our marine environment?' and ask how we could investigate this question, including data collection methods. Share ideas.
- 5 How littered is our marine environment? (Data collection – Fieldwork)**
Travel to location (or use virtual fieldtrip) and collect data on the types of litter polluting the marine environment, as well as any evidence of animals or plants. Complete a sketch map of the location, marking any human or physical features such as car parks or sand dunes.
- 6 How littered is our marine environment? (Findings – Fieldwork)**
Demonstrate how to input data from a tally chart to create a pie chart, using technology/software. Interpret data to answer questions: what was the most commonly found type of litter? Is this litter biodegradable? What does that mean for the surrounding environment? Where could this litter have come from? Use digital map to add key findings to each of the three locations visited at the marine environment.