Ocean world

Gloria Barnett and Andrew Lamb (for Footprint to the Future)
Stafford: Millgate House, 2019
Resource pack. £47.00

A comprehensive yet flexible guide to running a cross-curricular project based on marine conservation with ages 8–12

It was very exciting to receive and open this box. It is packed full of resources and information that fills the teacher with confidence. The information comes in two forms: physical and downloadable. The support materials are great for increasing teacher knowledge. There is a handbook, *The amazing world beneath the waves*, that very successfully imparts knowledge, as well as stimulating awe and wonder at our magnificent oceans. The chapters are mostly easy to navigate and it is easy to find the information you are after.

Aside from the teacher support notes, the project is split into eight activities. For each activity there is a physical activity card alongside physical and downloadable resources that are listed at the top of the activity card. There is a *PowerPoint* for each of the eight activities, and many of them have narration, which is invaluable. These slides and the accompanying narration are excellent at making the underwater world come to life. They really encourage awe and wonder at every stage: classes will love the facts and the way the questions make them think.

The activity cards include lots of information on them to enable the teacher to confidently deliver an informative and thought-provoking session. This should not give the impression that these activities are over prescriptive: it is important that the teacher reads and digests the activity cards beforehand. This enables the teachers to prepare the provided resources for a whole class and tailor the session for their class. For example, at some points the teacher is asked to lead a discussion about the water cycle with just bullet points to consider, so teachers will need to read and consider how they would deliver this to their class. When the teachers need support (in terms of subject knowledge, cross-curricular links or links to the way marine biologists work), they are very carefully supported. However, teachers are given freedom to deliver other ideas within the curriculum the way they choose.

Within these activities there is a mix of key ideas to share, facts to explore, games to play, cross-curricular links, a variety of ways of presenting information as well as a vast wealth of scientific knowledge and understanding. The resource is exciting for teachers and children alike and will foster a love and enthusiasm for marine life. It is comprehensive but also allows teachers to follow their own line of enquiry with their class. There is plenty of science contained in the box as well as links to other areas of the curriculum, which mimics science and enquiry in the real world. It is undoubtedly a project that teachers will enjoy running every year.

Charlotte Thomas

Science Lead, Ashton Gate Primary School, and an SLE for the Bristol Primary School Teaching Alliance

Our living planet: life and evolution on Earth

Rob Colson
London: Wayland, 2018
32 pp. £12.99
ISBN 978 1 5263 0504 6

A glimpse into the wide range of living things on our planet and how they have evolved and managed to survive, for age 7+

This book very much acts as an overview to the way life has developed on Earth. Right from the outset it grabs your attention with its eye-catching design and interesting layout. The mix of labelled diagrams and photographs give it a quirky feel that children will enjoy. Important information is emboldened or enlarged, making it easy to locate for younger children, and it has a strong colour palette that similarly will appeal to young readers.

The book is accessible for a range of ages as the language is palatable and information is easy to follow. For instance, for younger readers it has illustrated life cycles of flowering plants and invertebrates. In comparison, those curious about the chemical change occurring during photosynthesis are given the compound formulas. The book provides the reader with excellent information that leaves you wanting to know more without getting bogged down with too much text. Indeed, a year 4 pupil (age 8) in my class told me that he thought it explained things well and that he was never bored by it. He also thought that the book contained lots more interesting information than other books he had read about Earth.

The book is closely tied to, and meshes well with, the National Curriculum. There are two particularly interesting sections, named 'The hunters and the hunted' and 'Taking flight', which illustrate these two important life processes. Throughout the book there are 'Try this' sections with short science experiments that challenge readers in a number of ways, including spotting camouflaged animals on the page to growing your own bacteria. What's more, there is a short quiz at the back based on the different sections of the book.

This book would make a good addition to your book corner or school library.

James Mepsted

Teacher, Victoria Park Primary School

Science makers: making with sound

Anna Claybourne
London: Wayland, 2018
32 pp. £10.58
ISBN 978 1 5263 0546 6

A collection of great hands-on activities that are relevant to today's culture, suitable for ages 9–11

One of a series of four books, the others covering forces, light and machines, initially, this book looked like a typical children's craft book. It contains all the classic and familiar activities linked to sound, such as listening through paper cups connected by string and making percussion instruments with varying pitches from household objects. However, it includes numerous interesting and exciting activities, clearly set out and easy to carry out using household objects. Ideas are provided for how you can take the activities further and short but effective links to science theory.

I particularly like the projects on making a hydrophone to hear underwater, creating a sound sculpture, and an intruder trap – where circuits are required (linking it to knowledge about electricity). I love that each project is linked to a scientist, inventor, musician or artist, with a little fact file. Linking the projects to real people and other areas of the curriculum, makes them feel more purposeful and more than just a craft activity.

From a learner's perspective this book provides great hands-on activities that are relevant to today's culture. From a teacher's perspective, the book would provide opportunities for great starting points through child-initiated questions and conversations.

Victoria Butler

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