

## SHARKS!

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**The lesson:** The lesson was planned for a Secondary II Core ESL group. The students were doing a unit on wild animals. This lesson is about the often feared and misunderstood shark.

**Broad area of learning:** environmental awareness

**Cross-curricular competencies:** *To use information* and *To cooperate with others*

**ESL competencies:** all three from the Secondary Cycle One Core program

**Educational aims:** to help students develop a deeper understanding of sharks through various texts and to promote a more responsible attitude towards the species. It is also to have students use personal knowledge, information found in texts and collected through active listening and sharing to write a meaningful short paragraph about Zooky the Shark.

**Resources:** KWL chart\*  
12 Facts about sharks and True or False grid\*  
Reading: text and questions about sharks\*  
Vocabulary and writing worksheet\*  
Writing checklist\*  
Dictionary  
[www.sharkattack.com](http://www.sharkattack.com)  
[www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/)  
[www.marinelab.sarasota.fl.us/~rhueter/sharks/myths.phtml](http://www.marinelab.sarasota.fl.us/~rhueter/sharks/myths.phtml)

### Procedure:

1. Brainstorming - Teacher asks questions about sharks to activate prior knowledge

- a) What do you know about sharks?
- b) Where do they live?
- c) What colour are they?
- d) What do they eat?
- e) How long is a shark?
- f) What kind of animal is a shark?
- g) Can you name some species of sharks?

Note: to illustrate the length of a mature great white shark - 7,5 to 8 meters - (question e), ask a student to stand in front of you and take 15 short steps then turn around. Ask another student to take 5 short steps or 1,5 meters, which is the length of a baby great white at birth.

2. KWL chart - Teacher gives students a KWL chart. Individually, students fill out #1&2: what they **K**now and what they would **L**ike to know about sharks. This is set aside for later use.

3. True or False - Teacher hands out a worksheet containing an answer grid and 12 statements about sharks. For example: Most sharks are harmful to people. Students must try to guess whether the statements are true or false, first on their own then with a partner to compare and discuss their answers and come up with a final decision. The teacher then corrects the answers (acetate) with the students. Note: all answers are false.

4. Text and questions – Teacher hands out the she story of the great white shark with 8 comprehension questions. Individually, students read the text and answer the questions. The answers are then peer-corrected or corrected collectively.

5. KWL chart - Students now fill out the last column, #3, what they **L**earned about sharks. Teacher may want students to compare and complete their charts with a partner.

6. Writing - Students will reinvest what they learned by writing a short paragraph of 60 to 100 words about a shark named Zooky. They use the dictionary to find synonyms, the text and KWL chart as resources. They then edit their composition using the writing checklist. Teacher will collect the compositions and grade them according to a grid that should be given and explained to the students ahead of time.

7. Follow-up - Students are given a handout with 10 amazing facts about sharks. Students are asked to read and pick 3 impressive/interesting facts and write about why he/she finds it impressive.

A note from the editor:

Although this lesson was planned for a secondary 2 class, it can be adapted for younger students. Most of the work was done individually to facilitate management of the students and of the work. It is guided by the teacher but is not teacher-centred. Add peer-correcting, peer-editing and an exchange of stories for reading if more interaction is desired. The reading and writing, however, are best done individually and the writing should be done in class if it is to be graded.

## Worksheets for **Sharks!**

1. KWL chart
2. True or False  
(You will find the statements you want at the Web sites above. Even though the statements reflect popular beliefs, all should be false.)
3. Reading: The Great White Shark
4. Questions on the reading
5. Writing activity

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

***KWL Chart***

*Fill in the chart below with information about  
the great white shark.*

<p><u><i>What I Know</i></u></p> <p>Write 2 facts</p>	<p><u><i>What I Want to know</i></u></p> <p>Write two questions</p>	<p><u><i>What I Learned</i></u></p> <p>Write two facts</p>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read the statements and write **true or false**
2. With a partner compare and discuss your answers
3. Write the final answer that you and your partner agree on

TRUE/FALSE	Final answer
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	

## **The Great White Shark**

When a great white shark is born along with a dozen siblings, it immediately swims away from its mother. Baby sharks are on their own right from the start, and their mother may see them only as prey. At birth the baby shark is about 1,5 meters long already; as it grows it may reach a length three times that.

The pup (which is what a baby shark is called) will live its life at the top of the food chain. As the largest predatory fish in the ocean, great white sharks are the top predators of the sea. But before it grows larger the pup must avoid predators bigger than it is – including other great white sharks. Many baby sharks do not survive their first year.

Young great white sharks eat fish (including other sharks) and rays. As it grows, the shark's favourite prey becomes sea mammals, especially sea lions and seals. Sharks count on the element of surprise as they hunt. When they see a seal at the surface of the water, sharks will often position themselves underneath the seal. Then they swim upward at a fast sprint, bursting out of the water in a leap called a breach, and falling back into the water with the seal in their mouths.

Sharks don't chew their food; they rip off chunks of meat and swallow them whole. After eating a seal or sea lion, the great white shark can last a month or two without another big meal.

Answer the following questions using the story.

1. How many pups does the female great white shark give birth to?
2. What does a great white shark do when it is born and why?
3. What is a 'pup'?
4. The story says: "it will live its life at the top of the food chain", what does this mean?
5. What does the great white shark need to do to survive its first year?
6. What is the great white shark's favourite food?
7. Does the great white shark chew its food? Yes/No and Why?
8. How long can a great white shark go without eating food?



## *My Writing Checklist*

Did I check...	Yes	No
1. Did I check my spelling?		
2. Did I use 50 – 100 words?		
3. Did I use the dictionary?		
4. Did I check my punctuation?		
5. Did I ask for help from my peers and teacher?		
6. Did I use my imagination?		