

# Sea Turtle Ambassador: A Mission to Save the Seas

## Materials Needed:

- Computer or tablet with internet access
- Notebook or journal
- Pencils, pens, and colored pencils or markers
- Large poster board OR access to digital presentation software (like Google Slides, Canva, or PowerPoint)
- Optional: Recycled materials (cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, string, etc.) for a 3D model

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## Lesson Plan Details

**Subject:** Science (Biology, Environmental Science), Language Arts (Research, Persuasive Communication), Art

**Grade Level:** Middle School (Ages 11-13)

**Time Allotment:** 2-3 hours (can be completed in one session or split across two days)

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify the seven species of sea turtles and describe a key characteristic for at least three of them.
- Analyze and explain at least two major threats facing sea turtle populations worldwide.
- Synthesize research to design a creative and persuasive conservation campaign (e.g., a poster, presentation, or model).
- Propose a clear, actionable solution that individuals can take to help protect sea turtles.

## Instructional Sequence

### Part 1: The Briefing (Introduction - 20 minutes)

1. **The Hook:** Begin by watching a short, compelling video about sea turtles. Search for "Sea Turtle Hatchlings Journey to Sea" or "What Do Sea Turtles Eat?" on National Geographic Kids or the WWF YouTube channel.
2. **The Mission:** Introduce the day's challenge. "Welcome, Agent. You have just been appointed a 'Sea Turtle Ambassador.' Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to investigate the dangers facing these ancient mariners, choose one critical threat to focus on, and create an awareness campaign to inspire others to protect them."
3. **Activate Prior Knowledge:** Ask the student to write down everything they already know or think they know about sea turtles in their journal. This could be anything from "they live in the ocean" to "they are endangered."

## Part 2: Field Research (Investigation - 45-60 minutes)

In this phase, the student acts as an investigative agent, gathering intelligence for their mission.

1. **Task 1: Identify the Species.** Using reliable websites like the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), NOAA Fisheries, or National Geographic, the student will research the seven species of sea turtle (Flatback, Green, Hawksbill, Kemp's Ridley, Leatherback, Loggerhead, and Olive Ridley). In their journal, they should create a small profile for each, noting its name, habitat, and one "TOP SECRET" fun fact.
2. **Task 2: Identify the Threats.** The student will now investigate the dangers sea turtles face. They should aim to understand problems like plastic pollution, illegal trade, getting caught in fishing gear (bycatch), habitat loss from coastal development, and the effects of climate change.
3. **Task 3: Select a Target.** From their research, the student must choose **one** specific threat to focus their campaign on. They should take detailed notes on why it is so harmful to sea turtles.

## Part 3: The Action Plan (Creative Project - 60-90 minutes)

Now the Ambassador moves from research to action. They will use their findings to create a project designed to educate and inspire. The student can choose **one** of the following formats:

- **Option A: Public Service Announcement (PSA) Poster.** Using the poster board and art supplies, design a visually powerful poster. It must include a catchy slogan, an illustration, a clear explanation of the threat, and a simple, actionable step people can take to help (e.g., "Choose Reusable Bags to Protect Our Turtle Friends!").
- **Option B: The "Community Briefing" Presentation.** Using digital software like Google Slides or Canva, create a short (3-5 slide) presentation. Imagine you are briefing a community group. The presentation should introduce a sea turtle species, explain the chosen threat with facts and figures, and propose a community-level solution (e.g., organizing a local beach cleanup).
- **Option C: "The Problem" 3D Diorama.** Using recycled materials, build a diorama that visually represents the threat. For example, create a model of a sea turtle swimming through a "jellyfish field" made of plastic bags, or a nesting beach cluttered with trash. The diorama must be accompanied by a small, handwritten card explaining the scene and what people can do to prevent it.

## Part 4: The Debrief (Conclusion & Presentation - 15 minutes)

1. **Present Your Campaign:** The student presents their finished project, explaining their creative choices and the core message of their campaign.
2. **Reflection Questions:** Engage in a reflective discussion.
  - What was the most shocking or surprising fact you discovered during your research?
  - Why did you choose this specific threat for your campaign?
  - If you could send one message to the whole world about sea turtles, what would it be?
  - Based on what you learned, what is one real change our family can make starting today to help protect the oceans?

## Assessment

The final project serves as the summative assessment. It can be evaluated based on the following simple criteria:

- **Accuracy and Content:** Does the project accurately represent a sea turtle species and a real threat? Is the information clear and correct?

- **Persuasiveness and Clarity:** Is the message of the campaign clear, convincing, and easy for an audience to understand?
- **Creativity and Effort:** Does the project show thoughtful effort, originality, and creative thinking?
- **Actionable Solution:** Does the project include a clear, practical solution or call to action?

## **Differentiation and Extension**

- **For Extra Support:** Provide a pre-selected list of 3-4 websites to streamline the research process. Offer a simple template for the poster or presentation slides to help structure the information. Work together to brainstorm ideas for the creative portion.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Have the student write a persuasive letter to a company whose products often contribute to ocean pollution (e.g., a plastic bottle manufacturer), explaining the problem and suggesting a change they could make. Another option is to research a specific sea turtle rescue organization, create a small fundraising plan, and present it.