

Materials Needed:

- Large blue construction paper or poster board
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Pictures or small drawings of sea animals (examples: dolphin, clownfish, sea turtle, anglerfish, viperfish, squid, jellyfish, whale, sea star) - You can draw these beforehand or print simple outlines!
- Glue stick (optional, if using cut-out pictures)
- Optional: Short online videos about ocean zones or specific sea animals

Lesson Activities:

Introduction: Our Amazing Ocean! (5 mins)

Let's talk about the biggest habitat on Earth - the ocean! It's huge and deep, and filled with incredible animals. But did you know the ocean isn't the same all the way down? It changes a lot, and different animals live in different parts. Today, we're going to become Ocean Explorers and discover these different ocean homes!

Activity 1: Create an Ocean Zones Chart (15-20 mins)

Take your large blue paper and turn it sideways (landscape). We're going to divide it into three sections, like layers in the ocean.

1. Draw two lines across the paper to make three big horizontal sections.
2. Label the top section: **Sunlight Zone (Epipelagic)**. This is the top layer where the sun shines brightly! Color this section a bright, light blue. What do you think it feels like here? (Warm!)
3. Label the middle section: **Twilight Zone (Mesopelagic)**. Only a little bit of sunlight reaches here, making it dim. Color this a darker blue than the top. It's getting cooler here.
4. Label the bottom section: **Midnight Zone (Bathypelagic & Abyssopelagic)**. No sunlight reaches here at all! It's pitch black and very cold. Color this section very dark blue or black.

Activity 2: Populate the Zones! (15-20 mins)

Now let's place our sea animals in their correct homes!

1. Look at your sea animal pictures or drawings. Let's talk about each one.
2. **Sunlight Zone:** Where do animals that need lots of light and warmer water live? (Examples: Dolphins, sea turtles, clownfish, most sharks, coral reefs). Draw or glue these animals into the top zone. Think about why they live here (need sun, food is plentiful).
3. **Twilight Zone:** Which animals might live where it's dim? Many animals here have big eyes to see better, or can even make their own light (bioluminescence)! (Examples: Swordfish, some squid, viperfish, hatchetfish). Draw or glue these into the middle zone.
4. **Midnight Zone:** What kind of animals live in total darkness and cold? These are some strange and amazing creatures adapted to high pressure! Many are bioluminescent. (Examples: Anglerfish, vampire squid, gulper eel). Draw or glue these into the bottom zone.

Wrap-up & Discussion (5-10 mins)

Look at your amazing Ocean Zones chart! Why can't an anglerfish live in the Sunlight Zone? (Too bright, wrong food, maybe too warm). Why wouldn't a sea turtle live in the Midnight Zone? (Needs air, warmer water, different food). Every animal is perfectly suited for its special place in the ocean! Optional: Watch a short video about one of the zones or a specific creature like the anglerfish.