

Sharks unit study

Turn a shark obsession into a homeschool curriculum — marine biology, evolution, data literacy and conservation, for K-12 learners.

GRADE BANDS K-2 · 3-5 · 6-8 · 9-12

FULL GUIDE <https://handsdowneducation.com/homeschool/sharks>

How to use this planner

The six weeks below are sequenced from the guide's sample week: five weeks that each take one core subject through the topic, then a showcase week that turns the portfolio into a final product. Run each activity at the level your child is at (the grade band notes tell you how), keep the output, and by week six you have a portfolio that shows the unit end to end.

Pace is yours. A week here is three to five working sessions; a topic that is going well can take two calendar weeks, and one that has run dry can be closed early. Tick the box when a week's output is in the portfolio.

Six-week scope and sequence

Wk	Focus	Key activity	Portfolio output	Done
1	Reading & Writing through sharks	Compare a sensational shark headline with the research paper behind it, then rewrite the headline accurately — and explain what the original was doing.	Portfolio entry: the week's reading & writing piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
2	Math through sharks	Chart annual shark-attack deaths against deaths from vending machines, cows and falling coconuts, then discuss why perceived risk and actual risk diverge.	Portfolio entry: the week's math piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
3	Science through sharks	Study the ampullae of Lorenzini — electroreception — and design an experiment that would test whether a shark can detect a hidden battery.	Portfolio entry: the week's science piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
4	Social Studies through sharks	Map shark finning routes and the international agreements attempting to regulate them; identify who enforces what, and where enforcement fails.	Portfolio entry: the week's social studies piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
5	Art through sharks	Draw three shark species to scale beside a human silhouette — accurate proportion as the antidote to movie-poster distortion.	Portfolio entry: the week's art piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
6	Showcase and review	Choose one final product that pulls the unit together — a presentation, an exhibit, a field guide or a short documentary — and give the week to making it. Finish with a portfolio review: lay every week's output on the table and let your child narrate what changed in what they know about sharks.	The final product plus a one-page unit summary in your child's words, filed with the portfolio.	☐

Running it at your child's level

K-2 learners identify species by shape, count teeth and rows, and compare sizes — plus a first, gentle look at what a food chain means.

Older students can work with real tagging datasets, study cartilaginous versus bony fish evolution, and engage seriously with fisheries policy and bycatch.

A sample week, subject by subject

Reading & Writing

Compare a sensational shark headline with the research paper behind it, then rewrite the headline accurately — and explain what the original was doing.

Math

Chart annual shark-attack deaths against deaths from vending machines, cows and falling coconuts, then discuss why perceived risk and actual risk diverge.

Science

Study the ampullae of Lorenzini — electroreception — and design an experiment that would test whether a shark can detect a hidden battery.

Social Studies

Map shark finning routes and the international agreements attempting to regulate them; identify who enforces what, and where enforcement fails.

Art

Draw three shark species to scale beside a human silhouette — accurate proportion as the antidote to movie-poster distortion.

Common questions

Will this make my child more afraid of the water?

Typically the reverse. Children who learn the actual statistics and behavior tend to lose the movie-fed fear and replace it with interest.

Is there enough here beyond biology?

Yes — the media-literacy thread alone is worth weeks, and conservation policy brings in economics, international law and ethics.

Where do we get real data?

Several research groups publish live shark-tracking maps free online, and museum and aquarium sites host substantial teaching material.

Turn this into a full, standards-aligned curriculum

Generate a complete plan around sharks for your child's grade and pace — free to try, no account required.

<https://handsdowneducation.com/curriculum/generate>