

Litter and the ocean

Grades: 5-8

Materials

- Clear aquarium
- Water/saltwater
- Tin can
- Glass bottle
- Six-pack plastic holder
- Plastic bag
- 2L plastic bottle
- Styrofoam peanuts
- Pop can

Topic: In this activity students will learn about the impact of litter on ocean life.

Description

The demonstrator will introduce the topic of littering and the ocean. Each student will be asked to write down their predictions on whether these objects will float or sink. Student volunteers will get the chance to place their objects in an aquarium filled with water. The students will then observe what happens and compare it with their predictions.

The demonstrator will lead a discussion: Which objects floated and which ones sank? Will the objects that floated ever sink? What types of litter do they think are in the ocean? What does this mean for sea animals? [introduce example of turtles eating plastic bags because they look like jelly fish] Is all littering bad? [introduce topic of sunken ships for coral reefs]. What about chemicals dumped in the water?

Adapted from:

Martin, R., Sexton, C., Gerlovich, J. (1999). Science for all Children: lessons for constructing understanding. Allyn and Bacon: Boston. Pp. 244.