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Activity Guide

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Sharks

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ABOUT THE STORY

Sharks have inhabited the earth for more than 400 million years. In this clearly written and colorfully illustrated story, Gail Gibbons introduces viewers to the fascinating world of sharks. Several of the 350 known species are highlighted with facts on how and where they live, the ways in which they differ from other fish, how their bodies work, and how they survive in their environment. The conclusion of the book consists of unusual facts about sharks, as well as advice on how to react if encountering a shark while in the water.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Gail Gibbons is the author and illustrator of several books for young readers that clearly depict how things live or work. Among them are *Zoo*, *Whales*, *Wolves*, and *Sea Turtles*, all available as Live Oak Media Readalongs. Ms. Gibbons lives with her husband in Vermont.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they've ever seen a shark. If they have, ask them to tell where they were (maybe at an aquarium or on a whale watch) and what the shark looked like. Explain that there are many kinds of sharks and that this book tells about some of the most interesting species.

READING ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: What Do You Already Know?

Ask children what they know about sharks. After compiling a list of facts on the board, ask children what they would like to learn about sharks. Make note of these thoughts. Save these lists for discussion after reading the story.

Language Arts: Vocabulary

Some terms in the book may be unfamiliar to young readers. Have students work with a partner and use a dictionary to define the words that follow. Afterwards, go over the terms as a group to check for understanding.
scales senses reefs gill fierce migrate blood vessel aggressive species

Language Arts: Responding to Literature

Ask for reactions to the book. Review the lists compiled before the book was read. Correct any discrepancies and answer any questions still remaining. Ask children if they have a favorite shark and if they do, explain why.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Geography: Know Your Bodies of Water

The book opens with the words, "Sharks live in oceans." Use this sentence as a starting point to a geography exercise. Have the group use the school library media center to obtain the following information:

- How much of the earth's surface is covered by water? (72%)
- Find the names of the major oceans. (*Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Arctic, and Antarctic*)
- How does a sea differ from an ocean? (*A sea may be a clearly defined body of water within an ocean or a large landlocked body of water.*)
- Locate and name the major seas of the world. (*Baltic, Black, Caribbean, Caspian, Mediterranean, North, and Red*)

Art: Make a Poster

Have children work in groups. Each group selects a specific kind of shark. Look at several pictures and draw, color, and/or paint a poster-sized mural of the selected shark. Label the poster with the name of the shark, its food preferences, and where it lives, along with any other facts the children find interesting.

Science/Environmental: Have a Brainstorming Session

The book states that some types of sharks are in danger of becoming extinct. Discuss what this means. Then ask why this is so (extensive commercial and sport fishing, and pollution). Discuss possible ways to help these sharks.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

- Use the Internet to research sharks. Print out information and pictures and use them in reports and for projects.
- Use the Internet to conduct a further study on ocean life. Identify the zones where sharks are most likely to live. Illustrate on maps, labeling the name of the ocean, the species of shark, and any other relevant information.