

Sharks in Balance: Healthy Sharks, Healthy Oceans

Explore how sharks connect with other ocean life. Then create a poster that helps others understand one of those connections. Use these facts and questions to begin your classroom conversation.

The Big Idea

Sharks are not separate from the rest of the ocean. They are part of connected food webs, habitats, and communities. A strong poster can show one of those connections.

Four Facts to Explore

More Than 400 Million Years

Sharks were swimming in Earth's oceans long before the first dinosaurs appeared on land.

More Than 500 Species

Sharks come in a remarkable range of shapes and sizes, each suited to a different way of life.

Part of Ocean Balance

As predators, sharks influence prey populations and can remove sick or weakened animals from food webs.

Slow to Recover

Many sharks grow slowly, mature late, and produce few young, so populations may take a long time to rebuild.

Questions for Young Artists

- What other animals and habitats share the ocean with your shark?
- How can your artwork show a connection rather than an isolated animal?
- What do you want someone to understand or feel after seeing your poster?
- How could color, scale, movement, or composition help communicate that idea?

Watch and Learn

[The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's \(NOAA\) Cause a Sea Change: Save Sharks](#) introduces shark conservation and the role sharks play in healthy oceans. Additional shark facts are available from [NOAA Fisheries](#).

Sources for Educators

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): oceantoday.noaa.gov/sharks/savesharks.html
- NOAA Fisheries: fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/12-shark-facts-may-surprise-you