

Moondance Lesson Plan

Becoming a Sea Turtle Scientist

Grade Level: 3

Time: 45–60 Minutes

Text: Moondance by Kris Marvin

Essential Question

How do scientists learn about animals?

Big Idea

Scientists learn by observing, asking questions, and recording what they notice.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Make careful observations about sea turtles.
- Ask scientific questions.
- Record observations in a field journal.
- Describe the life cycle of a sea turtle.
- Use details from the story to explain what happens during nesting.

Materials

- Moondance
- Sea Turtle Scientist Field Journal worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Photos of nesting sea turtles and hatchlings (optional)

Hook: What Do You Notice? (5–10 Minutes)

Display a photo of a sea turtle on the beach.

Ask:

- What do you notice?
- What do you wonder?
- What questions would a scientist ask?

Record student responses on chart paper.

Explain: “Today we’re going to become sea turtle scientists.”

Read Aloud (15 Minutes)

Read Moondance aloud. Pause occasionally and ask:

- What is happening?
- What do you notice about the turtle?
- What clues tell us what might happen next?

Life Cycle Detective (10 Minutes)

After reading, work together to place the events of a sea turtle's life in order:

1. Mother turtle crawls onto the beach.
2. Turtle lays eggs.
3. Eggs develop in the nest.
4. Hatchlings emerge.
5. Hatchlings crawl to the ocean.
6. Young turtles grow into adults.

Discuss:

Why is each step important?

Sea Turtle Scientist Field Journal (15 Minutes)

Students complete their field journal page.

Observation: What did you notice about the sea turtle?

Question: What do you still wonder?

Prediction: What do you think happens after the story ends?

Sketch: Draw your favorite part of the nesting process.

Encourage students to think like real scientists by recording details carefully.

Discussion

Ask:

- Why do scientists make observations?
- Why is it important to ask questions?
- How did the scientist journal help you learn about sea turtles?

Assessment

Exit Ticket:

Draw and label one stage of the sea turtle life cycle. Write one fact you learned from Moondance.

Florida Standards

Science

SC.3.N.1.1

Raise questions about the natural world, investigate them individually and in teams through observation.

SC.3.N.1.3

Keep records as appropriate, such as pictorial and written records, of investigations conducted.

SC.3.L.17.1

Describe how animals use their physical characteristics and behaviors to survive in their environments.

English Language Arts

ELA.3.R.1.1

Explain how details support the central idea of a text.

ELA.3.C.1.2

Write informative texts about a topic using information from a source.