

7 Big Things to Know About Oceans

1

Oceans are all wet.

This is an obvious fact, but still pretty amazing! Think about oceans as big, connected bowls made out of rock and filled with salt water. A LOT of water. In fact, about 72 percent of Earth is covered by water in oceans. (The rest is in your bathtub! Just kidding!)

2

Many animals live in and around the ocean.

Because most humans live on land, we forget that oceans take up a lot more of our planet's space – and have more animals! Here are just a few animals who live in and around the ocean: starfish, octopus, stingray, shark, jellyfish, squid, whale, walrus, seal, penguin, seagull, crab, shrimp. Some sea animals, like whales, actually started as land animals! But they eventually lost their legs and found ways to live in the ocean.

3

Plants live in the ocean, too.

Your parents may have a beautiful vegetable garden or front lawn, but oceans are the best garden spots in the world! Not every sea animal eats other animals; many feast on delicious underwater plants instead.

4

There are different levels of the ocean.

It's strange to think of, but parts of the ocean are so deep they have huge underwater mountains and volcanoes we can't see! In fact, the largest mountain range isn't on land at all, but under the ocean. There are five different ocean levels or zones. The deeper you go, the colder and darker it gets! Most animals and plants live in the Sunlight Zone, where the water is warm and sunlight makes it easy to see. The deepest levels, the Abyss Zone and the Trenches, have very few animals because it is so dark and cold there.

5

Oceans move. The moon is involved!

There are two different ways the oceans move. One is the water cycle, where water evaporates from the ocean (and other bodies of water) into the air and becomes clouds. When the clouds get heavy, water droplets form and create precipitation, which falls to the ground – and back to the ocean! The second way oceans move is through tides, which are controlled by the force of gravity from the moon. Water rises and gets closer to land at "high tide" and then pulls back and away from land at "low tide."

6

Humans love to explore oceans and ocean animals.

More people have traveled to the moon than the deepest levels of the ocean, but that doesn't mean we don't have many sea explorers! Sylvia Earle, Jacques Cousteau and Eugenie Clark are all famous oceanographers you can read more about at the library.

7

Seas and oceans are the same but different.

We usually use the words "sea" and "ocean" interchangeably, but seas are smaller parts of the ocean, closer to land. For example, the Norwegian Sea is close to the land of Sweden and Iceland, but it's also part of the much larger Arctic Ocean. Think of an ocean as a large dress with lots of pieces and seas as pockets in that dress!

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