

# Design An Ocean Wanderer

This activity is based on *Design a Plankton!*

Copyright © 2000. Gulf of Maine Aquarium, based on *Create Your Own Plankton* by Bette Low

Materials:

Illustrations of plankton (examples below)

“Create Your Own Plankton” worksheet (below)

Colored pencils, crayons

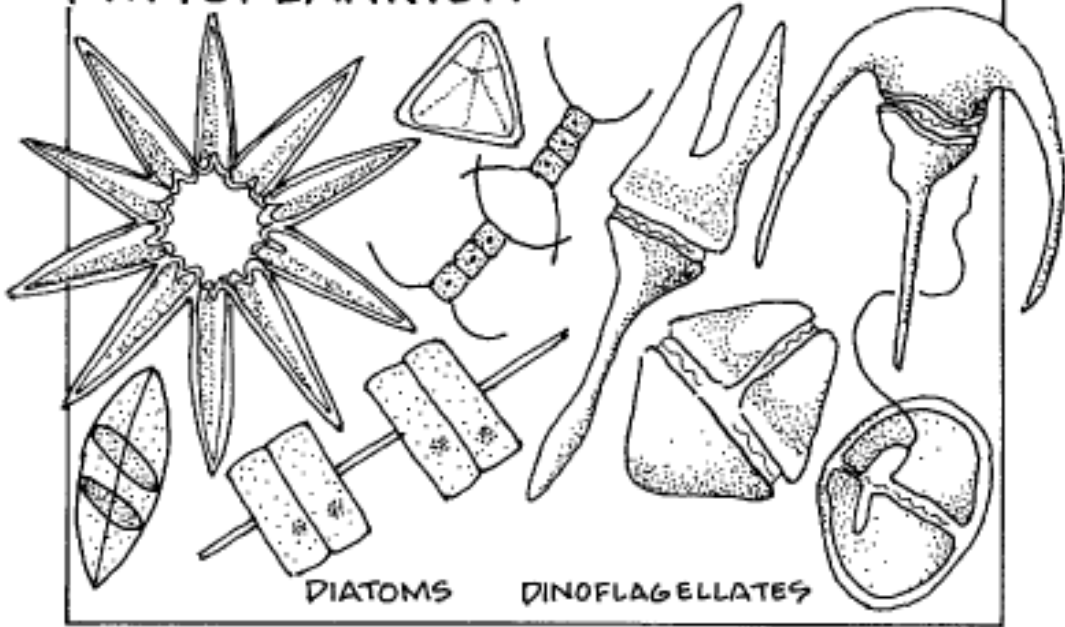
1. Show students the variety of plants and animals that make up plankton and explain that they are the basis of the food chain in the sea, on which all other life depends.
2. Although plankton are not strong swimmers, many do have adaptations for
  - keeping afloat
  - catching the wind
  - wriggling toward prey
  - capturing prey

Explain that plants use the sun’s energy to make their own food, and phytoplankton do the same thing! They use the sun’s energy to help them make their own food. Zooplankton are more animals like in that they have to eat other things for their energy (like us). Zooplankton eat phytoplankton and other zooplankton.

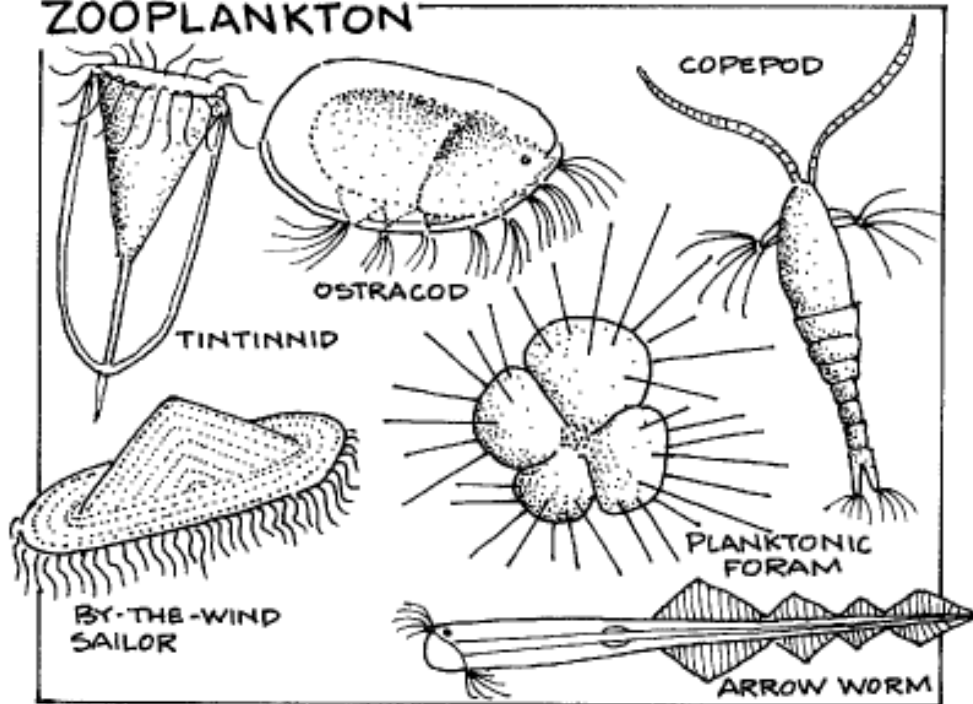
3. Ask students to invent their own plankton.
  - They will have to make decisions about its adaptations and life style.
  - They can then make a picture of it and describe how it survives.
4. Have students make a list of organisms that live in the Gulf of Maine.
5. Then draw pictures of the organisms, cut them out, and attach the pictures to strings to make "food chain" mobiles. Put the phytoplankton at the bottom and the carnivores, such as sharks and seals, at the top. (There should be many more phytoplankton than seals.)

Be sure students include both phytoplankton (plant-like plankton) and zooplankton ( animal-like plankton).

# PHYTOPLANKTON



# ZOOPLANKTON



Design a Plankton Worksheet

START BY DRAWING A SHAPE IN THE CIRCLE

HOW WILL IT EAT?

IT WILL MAKE FOOD FROM THE SUN  
COLOR YOUR SHAPE GREEN

OR

IT WILL CATCH OTHER PLANKTON  
GIVE IT A MOUTH

HOW WILL IT MOVE?

IT WILL FLOAT WITH THE CURRENTS  
DRAW WINGS, HAIRS, LEGS OR FLAPS TO HELP IT FLOAT

OR

IT WILL SWIM  
DRAW SHORT HAIRS CALLED "CILLIA" OR LONG HAIRS CALLED "FLAGELLA" TO HELP IT SWIM

OR

IT WILL ENTANGLE THEM IN LONG STRINGS  
DRAW LONG STRINGS WITH SHORT STICKING HAIRS

OR

IT WILL CHASE AND CATCH THEM  
DRAW ARMS, LEGS, EYES OR CATCHES

IT WILL SPEND ITS ENTIRE LIFE FLOATING AS A PLANKTON

OR

IT WILL GROW LARGER AND DROP TO THE BOTTOM LIKE CRABS AND CLAMS

CHECK ONE BOX

NAME OF YOUR PLANKTON:

YOUR NAME