

Are you and your students *ocean literate*?

To be *ocean literate* is to understand both the ocean's influence on you and your influence on the ocean. If you are *ocean-literate*, you understand how the ocean functions, can communicate about the ocean in a meaningful way, and are able to make informed decisions about the ocean and its resources.

This concept was developed in 2004 by 100 ocean science and education professionals under the guidance of The National Geographic Society and NOAA. Their work addresses the state of ocean science in the classroom: It is one of the most underrepresented subjects in K-12, resulting in citizens who lack the background to make informed decisions about critical ocean issues.

The group defined seven essential principles and supporting fundamental concepts that every citizen must grasp in order to be ocean literate:

- The Earth has one big ocean with many features.
- The ocean and life in the ocean shape the features of the Earth.
- The ocean is a major influence on weather and climate.
- The ocean makes Earth habitable.
- The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.
- The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.
- The ocean is largely unexplored.

To help you incorporate *ocean literacy* concepts into your curriculum, a matrix was developed that relates the essential principles to the National Science Education Standards. The matrix is included in the *Ocean Literacy* brochure, available at www.coexploration.org/oceanliteracy.

For more information on ocean literacy, please check out these websites:

www.ngsednet.org/oceans

www.marine-ed.org

www.cosee.net

www.education.noaa.gov