

The Beach Sweep *By Kate Boehm Jerome*

10–11 years +

Introduction

The narrator of this story isn't happy about having to help clean up the beach as part of his science project. But his experiences during the day change his attitude, and he starts to understand the importance of caring for the environment.

Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students:

- as part of a wider unit on conservation, specifically to learn about environmental issues at the beach
- to examine the character development in the story
- to explore some of the keen observations and descriptive language in the story.

Setting the scene

Draw on your students' prior knowledge. If necessary, introduce concepts or vocabulary to help them access the story. Also communicate the reason for reading.

- Discuss the students' understandings and experiences of conservation. "What environmental issues do you know about, locally or globally?" Discuss the concept of "saving the planet". Alternatively, you could elicit prior knowledge through a postbox or "think, pair, share" activity. Write key vocabulary on the board.
- Print Template A, the KWLH chart, from the back of this document. Alternatively, create a KWLH chart on the board. Have the students fill in the first two columns with what they know and want to know about environmental issues and conservation. After reading, they can fill in the final two columns (what they learned and how they learned it).
- Introduce any vocabulary that your students may need to access the text. Refer to Worksheet 3 for a list of potentially unfamiliar words. You could carry out this activity before or after reading. (See "Taking a closer look – Exploring language".)

Getting stuck in

Choose the prompts that you feel your students need. Remind them to note any unfamiliar words and check for clues to the meanings in the text or images. The meanings of words in bold text are in the glossary at the back of the book.

- End page 3 – "How is the boy (the narrator) feeling about the beach clean-up? What do you think of his attitude? How would you describe him?"
- End page 7 – "What environmental problem has the boy discovered here?"
- End page 11 – "Do you think the boy is surprised to find out about the problems with plastic? Does he take the problems seriously? What makes you say that? Did you know about these problems?"
- End page 13 – "What is the environmental problem here? How seriously does the boy take it? What makes you say that? Did you know about this problem?"

- End page 16 – “I’ve noticed a change in the boy – have you? What is it?”
- End page 19 – “What is the environmental problem here? How do you think the boy will respond?”
- End page 21 – “Is this what you expected? Do you think it’s what the boy expected? Why or why not? What do you think of his actions and why?”
- End page 23 – “How does the boy feel now? How would you describe him?”

Taking a closer look

Choose suggestions that suit your students and reason for reading.

Exploring ideas and opinions

- “Did you enjoy this story? What did you like or dislike about it and why? Why do you think the author wrote it? Why do you say that?”
- Have the students complete Worksheet 1 (the three-level thinking guide) and discuss their responses in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
- The students could work individually or in groups to revisit the text and summarise the environmental problem that the narrator learns about in each chapter. “What causes the problem? What is affected? What solutions can you think of?”
- Have the students complete the KWLH chart with things they’ve learned about environmental issues.

Exploring character

- Explore how the narrator changes in the story. “How would you describe the boy at the beginning and end of the story?” You could write the students’ responses in a comparison chart. Compare the illustrations on pages 2 and 23. “Where does the shift start to take place? What causes the shift?” Look at the narrator’s final statement (“When I think of the injured sea turtle ... I know I have to try”) and discuss how important personal experience can be in how people think about things. Elicit the idea that the narrator learns as much about himself as he does about the environmental problems. “What exactly does he learn about himself?”

Exploring structure

- Give the students the statements from Worksheet 2 and have them sequence them in the correct order.
- You could briefly examine the structure of the story – how it takes place over a half day and how each chapter deals with one environmental issue, building to the resolution at the end. Support the students to identify how the narrator’s walking gives a sense of flow and progression to the story.

Exploring language

- Cut out the words and definitions from Worksheet 3 and muddle them up. Hand them out to individual students and have them find their correct “partner”.
- As an alternative to the above, divide the class into two groups and have them complete Worksheet 4a and Worksheet 4b respectively. This activity involves the students in creating the definitions, which they then use to test the other group.

- Your students could explore the vivid observations of people and things in the book. For example, they could look at the description of the lady on page 8 and of the pelicans on page 15. “Can you identify any similes?” They could also explore the humour that the author uses.
- Have your students complete Worksheet 5 – the cloze activity.

Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

Reading

- Read the GO for IT magazine designed to complement this book – Ocean Watch.

Writing

- In pairs, pretend you are a reporter and prepare a radio or television interview for Mr Giles to find out why he organised the beach sweep. Remember to use open-ended questions (why, what, when, where, who, how). Carry out your interviews, with one person acting as Mr Giles and one as the reporter. You could tape the interview for presentation to the class.

Research

- Research one of the environmental problems raised in the story – or a local one that you know about it. Explore both the problem and potential solutions. Create a poster informing people about the problem and what they can do about it.

Action

- Organise some action on a class or school level to address a local problem – for example, a “park sweep” or a tree-planting day.

WORKSHEET 1

The Beach Sweep – Three-level thinking guide

- Level 1 – Reading on the lines (interpreting what the text says on a literal level)
- Level 2 – Reading between the lines (inferring, or interpreting what the text might mean)
- Level 3 – Reading beyond the lines (evaluating ideas by relating them to other knowledge)

Students write “agree” or “disagree” beside each statement and then discuss their responses in pairs, in groups, or as a class. The value of this activity lies in the discussion it generates as students justify their views. The activity is not intended as a test for comprehension.

LEVEL 1	Agree/disagree
The boy isn't too keen on cleaning up the beach.	
All day, it is hot and sunny.	
The sea turtle has a deep cut on its fin.	
The sea turtle will be treated at an aquarium.	
Mr Giles believes the turtle will survive.	
The boy is upset about the turtle getting hurt.	
Plastic rubbish breaks down easily.	
Animals get tangled in the plastic rings of six-packs.	
Turtles think plastic bags are jellyfish and eat them.	
The boy would like to be a turtle.	
Seagulls can lose weight if people chase them when they land to feed.	
Pelicans have really good eyesight.	
The boy fills three bags with rubbish from the beach.	

LEVEL 2	Agree/disagree
The boy hopes to get good marks for his science project.	
The boy does not enjoy cleaning up the beach.	
Cleaning up the beach will help save the planet.	
Motor boats can injure sea animals.	
The teachers provide lunch for the students.	
Ghost crabs are not real crabs.	
The boy feels 10 centimetres taller because he's done a good job.	
The sand dunes would not exist without the dune grasses.	
The boy begins to take some responsibility for the earth.	
LEVEL 3	Agree/disagree
Mr Giles is not a very good science teacher.	
Rubbish is destroying the planet.	
We should all take responsibility for the earth.	
In the future, people will appreciate our efforts to care for the earth.	
People learn about themselves when they take care of the environment.	

Sheet 2 of 2

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 2

The Beach Sweep – Restore the order

Photocopy this worksheet. Cut out the statements and mix them up, keeping an intact master copy for yourself. Give each student a statement. Ask them to arrange themselves so that their statements are in the order of the story. To check that the order is correct, they can read their statements aloud in turn.

If I help clean up the beach, I can earn points on my science project.

Mr Giles says it's important to protect the planet for people in the future.

I see a group of kids huddled together.

A boat propeller has injured the sea turtle.

Doctors will try to repair the gash in its shell.

The turtle will need months of human care.

I have six more kilometres of beach to cover.

A lady gives me a drink and a new rubbish bag to fill.

Sometimes animals get tangled in plastic. Six-pack plastic rings are the worst.

A floating plastic bag can look a lot like a jellyfish, and turtles eat jellyfish.

The seagulls weren't eating enough because they were being chased by kids every time they landed to feed.

If I help clean up the beach, I can earn points on my science project.

The "ghost" crabs move quickly into holes in the sand.

I decide to rest a minute in the dunes.

The roots of the dune grasses hold the sand in place.

The man leads the dog away without a word when I tell him his dog has been digging up the dune grasses.

I am surprised at myself.

I begin to understand the need to take responsibility for the earth.

Sheet 2 of 2

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 3

The Beach Sweep – Match the meaning

Cut out the words and definitions, muddle them up, and have your students match them.

Word	Definition
environment	the natural world, the world around us
appreciate	to be thankful for
huddled	standing close to each other in a group
propellers	sets of rotating blades that move a boat through the water
aquarium	a place where animals that live in the water are kept and exhibited
upbeat	positive
dumb	stupid
dunes	hills of sand created by the wind, usually near the sea
annoyed	angry or bothered
responsibility	being in charge of something

Note that some words above may have other meanings in other contexts.

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 4a – GROUP A

The Beach Sweep – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 4a and half Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
environment (p. 3)	(p. 3)	
huddled (p. 4)	(p. 4)	
aquarium (p. 6)	(p. 6)	
dumb (p. 11)	(p. 11)	
annoyed (p. 21)	(p. 21)	

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WORKSHEET 4b – GROUP B

The Beach Sweep – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 4a and half Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group B)
appreciate (p. 3)	(p. 3)	
propellers (p. 5)	(p. 5)	
upbeat (p. 7)	(p. 7)	
dunes (p. 17)	(p. 17)	
responsibility (p. 22)	(p. 22)	

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WORKSHEET 5

The Beach Sweep – Fill in the gaps

Add your own words in the spaces to make this passage come alive!

I throw a shell the dog to him away. When doesn't work,

I get up try to shoo him The starts to growl at

..... . It thinks I'm to steal the fish. I to back away.

It would be my luck to get bitten by a dog when I'm just trying to do

a deed.

The owner shows up just in He puts the dog back on leash and

..... at it for straying far. It's clear the man not really worried

about the dunes.

I find very annoyed.

Try writing your own ending to the story as if you were the boy.

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TEMPLATE A

KWLH chart

<u><i>KNOW</i></u>	<u><i>WANT TO KNOW</i></u>	<u><i>LEARNED</i></u>	<u><i>HOW I LEARNED</i></u>