

◆ Monsters of the Sea ◆

Grade Level: 5th-7th

Length of Lesson: 1-2 Class Periods

Goals:

- Read and discuss mentions of mythical creatures in fiction writing.
- Read about and discuss the discovery of the giant squid.
- Make connections between mythical and fictional creatures, and living organisms.
- Formulate opinions on the existence of undiscovered sea creatures.

Core Academic Standards:

- Content Standard 8: Understanding a Text
- Content Standard 9: Making Connections
- Content Standard 12: Fiction
- Content Standard 13: Non-fiction
- Content Standard 26: Analysis of Media
- LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems
- LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience

Materials:

- *Monsters of the Sea* article, Scholastic Scope, March 12, 2012 - PDF found here:
[https://www.mhasd.k12.wi.us/cms/lib/WI01001388/Centricity/Domain/171/SQUID%20SCOPE-Paired Text.pdf](https://www.mhasd.k12.wi.us/cms/lib/WI01001388/Centricity/Domain/171/SQUID%20SCOPE-Paired%20Text.pdf)

Background

Many mythical and fictional creatures are based, to some extent, on fact. Throughout this activity, students will read a fictional account of a “sea monster,” and then learn, through the Scholastic Scope article *Monsters of the Sea*, the true account of the discovery of the giant squid.

Lesson: LAUNCH

1. Ask students what mythical or fictional creatures they have heard of (Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster, etc.). Ask them if they think these creatures have any basis in reality.
2. Have students read page 14 of the *Monsters of the Sea* article – an excerpt from Jules Verne’s novel “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.” You may wish to have students read this short passage out loud.

3. Ask students to discuss the possibility of the existence of a real sea monster like the one Captain Nemo and his crew encountered.

Lesson: INVESTIGATE

1. Hand out the main *Monsters of the Sea* article (pages 10-13). Have students read the article, writing down notes or bullet points to help them understand the information as they read.
2. After students have read the article by themselves, put them in small groups of 2 or 3. Let them discuss the article, as well as the possibility that other undiscovered creatures live in the 95% of the ocean that humans have yet to explore.

Lesson: PRACTICE

1. Give students this quote by J.R.R. Tolkien: “I believe that legends and myth are largely made of truth.” (The quote can also be found on page 14 of the article).
2. Ask students to write a persuasive essay that either agrees or disagrees with Tolkien’s statement. Students should use both the article and the selection from Jules Verne as evidence. If time and resources allow, you may wish to have students research other relevant information to aid them in writing their persuasive essay.

