

MANATEE TALES

A Conservation Nation Academy Lesson

Please visit www.conservationnation.org/lessons for complete lesson materials including the lesson video, student worksheet, and vocabulary list.



TIME REQUIRED

40 minutes

SUMMARY

Put yourself in the place of Conservation Nation grantee, Fátima Ramis, as she examines the complex perspectives and interactions of community members in and around a marine sanctuary in the Dominican Republic. This storytelling game is designed to help your students understand how our human situations and viewpoints have an impact on the conservation of wildlife such as the Antillean manatee.

OBJECTIVES

- Students learn about manatees and the conservation project of Conservation Nation grantee, Fátima Ramis.
- Students play a game to create stories about the many stakeholders involved in the protection of a marine sanctuary for manatees.
- Students reflect on the importance of addressing human experiences and perspectives when approaching wildlife conservation.
- Students identify ways they can help protect manatees and other marine wildlife.

MATERIALS AVAILABLE AT www.conservationnation.org/lessons

- Video of Conservation Nation grantee, Fátima Ramis
- 15 two-sided story cards that you will need to print out ahead of time and laminate if desired
- Copies of the Manatee Tales Worksheet for individual or group reflection
- Vocabulary list

OTHER MATERIALS NEEDED

- Dice for each pair of students

INSTRUCTIONS

First, watch the video as a class and let Fátima teach you about manatees and the work she did as a Conservation Nation grantee. At the 8-minute mark, when she indicates, pause the video to do the following activity:

- Give each student or pair of students one double-sided card.
- Important! Make sure you give out all cards, A-O.
- Ask the students to line up in alphabetical order based on the letter on their card.



- For each card, have the students roll the dice. If they roll an even number, they should read the even side of their card. If they roll an odd number, they should read the odd side of their card. [Note: You can have all students roll dice at the beginning and be ready to read either the even or odd side of their card, so the story reads more seamlessly, or have each student/pair roll the dice as they go down the line from A-O to build the story in real time.]
- Perform the story again, but this time read the opposite side of each card or mix up the cards and play the whole game again. See how the story changes depending on the perspective of the stakeholder.
- After playing this game and creating several “manatee tales,” continue watching the remainder of Fátima’s video.

REFLECTION

- The Manatee Tales Worksheet can be used for individual or group reflection.
- Below are questions for deeper discussion if time allows.
 - What are the different reasons why tourists visit the sanctuary? How can this affect the manatees?
 - Some restaurant owners use wood from the dry forest for their stoves, while others are looking for alternatives. How do you think this would have an impact on manatees?
 - What reasons are there for tour operators to be respectful of the sanctuary?
 - Why is the boat captain’s experience and knowledge important for both people and manatees?
 - Why do you think it is important for boats to slow down in areas where manatees live?
 - Fishermen have very close contact with manatees. What are some ways that they can harm or help manatees depending on the choices they make?
 - Sanctuary rangers are not paid very much. Do you think that if they had a higher salary, it would help or hurt manatees? Do you think it helps that the environmental guides are paid a portion of the tickets sold for ecotourism?
 - Why do farmers use fertilizer and pesticides? How does this affect manatees?
 - How do you think that developers building homes and resorts will affect manatees?
 - What do you see as the benefits and risks to manatees from different types of tourism? How might different types of tourism help or harm manatees?
 - The schoolteacher has students who are part of the fishing and tourism industry. Why is it important for the schoolteacher to discuss issues in a way that makes the students feel heard and supported?
 - If oyster collectors were not allowed to enter the sanctuary, what do you think the impact would be?
 - Are conservationists only concerned with the manatees? How does supporting the people have an impact? Why is it important to include people?

We hope you enjoyed this lesson!
Learn more about Conservation Nation at
www.conservationnation.org

