

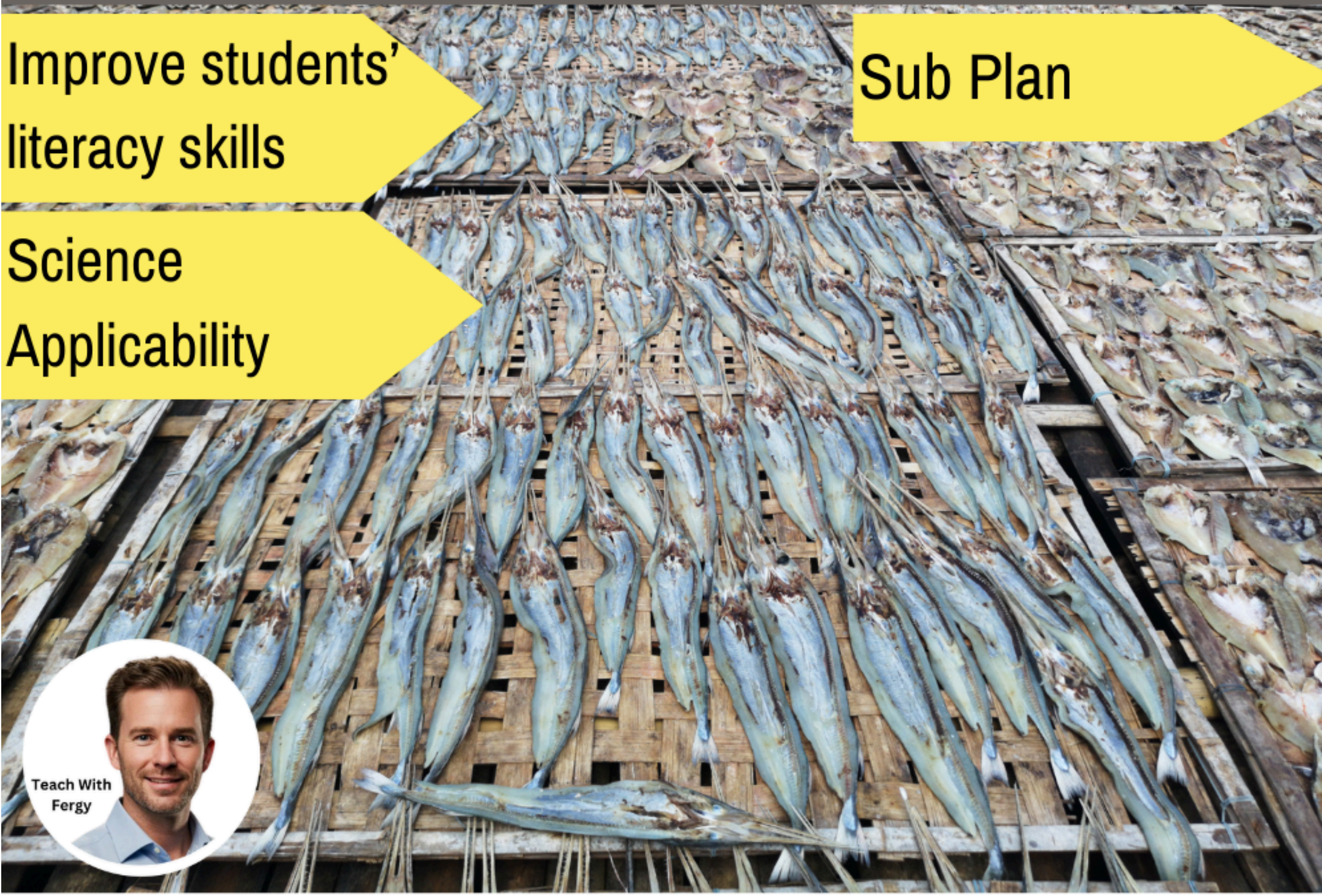
# OVERFISHING & OCEAN ECOSYSTEM COLLAPSE

## READING: 6TH, 7TH, 8TH GRADE

Improve students'  
literacy skills

Science  
Applicability

Sub Plan



## Reading Buyer Comment



★★★★★ Extremely satisfied - Great resource to work on student reading comprehension and it tied into the topic I was teaching. My students have been struggling with reading and I've been incorporating more reading into my lessons. Thank you for the resource.



**SCROLL**  
to take a look inside!

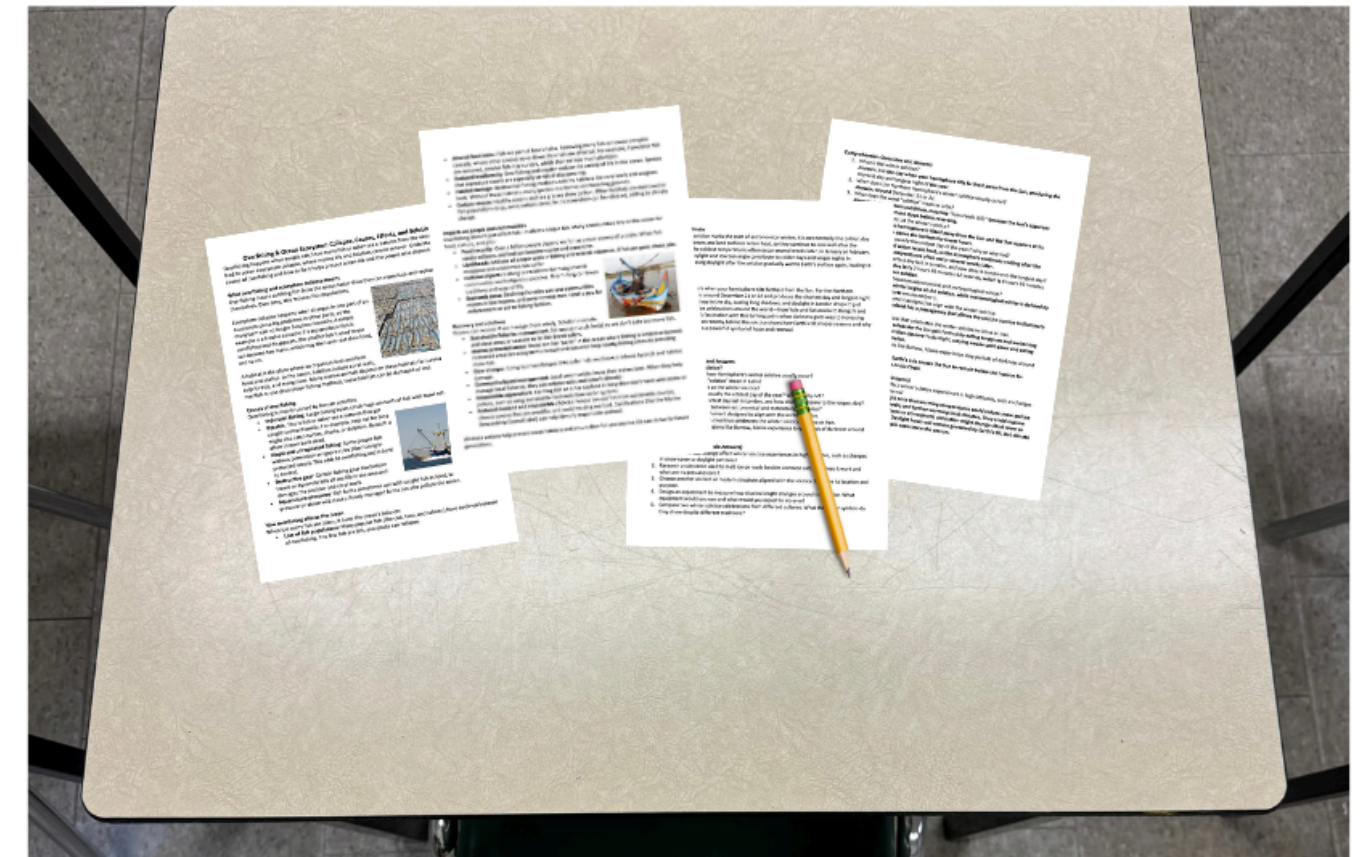


# THE PROBLEMS YOU FACE

- Limited time to teach scientific literacy and strengthen students' reading and analysis skills.
- Need meaningful extension activities to engage fast-moving learners.
- Difficulty creating effective last-minute sub plans that still support student learning.

## NO-PREP - PRINT/UPLOAD

- Questions and Answer Key
- **No Prep, Ready-to-Use:** Print or assign digitally with Google Docs, Microsoft Word, and PDF formats for flexible classroom use
- **Includes Varied Question Types:** Knowledge, thinking, connecting, application, and open-ended questions.



# What Will Your Students Learn?

## READING COMPREHENSION ARTICLE & QUESTIONS

- What Is Overfishing?
- Food Web Disruption and Trophic Cascades
- Causes and Consequences of Overfishing
- Ocean Biodiversity and Ecosystem Collapse
- Bycatch and Unintended Catch Impacts
- Fisheries Science and Sustainability
- Marine Protected Areas and Conservation Strategies

Article with  
Comprehension  
Questions

6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Print & Digital

### Comprehension Questions

1. What does overfishing mean in this reading?
2. Describe an ecosystem collapse in your own words.
3. Give two causes of overfishing mentioned in the text.
4. What is bycatch and why is it harmful?
5. Name one effect of bottom trawling on ocean habitats.
6. How do overfishing and bottom trawling affect populations and biodiversity?
7. Explain the difference between sustainable and unsustainable fishing.
8. What are the consequences of overfishing?
9. Name one marine protected area.
10. Why is it important to conserve marine resources?

### Extension Questions

1. Find the main idea of the article.
2. Research the impact of overfishing on a specific marine species.
3. Investigate the role of marine protected areas in conservation.
4. Find a solution to overfishing and present it to the class.

### Overfishing & Ocean Ecosystem Collapse: Causes, Effects, and Solutions

Overfishing happens when people catch too many fish or other sea creatures from the ocean. This can lead to ocean ecosystem collapse, where marine life and habitats cannot recover. Understanding the causes of overfishing and how to fix it helps protect ocean life and the people who depend on it.

**What overfishing and ecosystem collapse means**  
Overfishing means catching fish from the ocean faster than they can reproduce and replace themselves. Over time, this reduces fish populations.

Ecosystem collapse happens when changes in one part of an ecosystem cause big problems in other parts, so the ecosystem can no longer function normally. A simple example is a trophic cascade: if a top predator fish is overfished and disappears, the smaller fish it used to eat can become too many, which may then over-eat their food, and so on.



A habitat is the place where an organism lives and finds food and shelter. In the ocean, habitats include coral reefs, kelp forests, and mangroves. Many marine animals depend on these habitats for survival. When we overfish or use destructive fishing methods, these habitats can be damaged or lost.

### Causes of overfishing

- Overfishing is mainly caused by human activities:
- **Industrial fishing:** Large fishing boats catch huge amounts of fish with trawl nets and longlines.
  - **Bycatch:** This is fish or other sea creatures that get caught unintentionally. For example, nets set for tuna often throw back dead sharks, dolphins, or dolphins. Bycatch is often thrown back dead.
  - **Illegal and unregulated fishing:** Some people fish without permission or ignore rules (like fishing in protected areas). This adds to overfishing and is hard to control.
  - **Destructive gear:** Certain fishing gear like bottom trawls or dynamite kills all sea life in the area and damages the seafloor and coral reefs.
  - **Aquaculture pressures:** Fish farms sometimes use wild-caught fish as feed, which also pollutes the water.

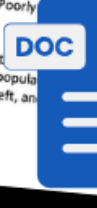


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# Your Reading

## Overfishing & Ocean Ecosystem Collapse: Causes and Solutions

Overfishing happens when people catch too many fish or other marine life faster than they can reproduce, reducing fish populations. This can lead to ocean ecosystem collapse, where marine life and habitats are lost. This article explores the causes of overfishing and how to fix it to help protect ocean life and ensure sustainable fishing for future generations.

### What overfishing and ecosystem collapse means

Overfishing means catching fish from the ocean faster than they can reproduce. Over time, this reduces fish populations and can lead to ecosystem collapse.

Ecosystem collapse happens when changes in one part of an ecosystem cause big problems in other parts, so the ecosystem can no longer function normally. A simple example is a trophic cascade: if a top predator fish is overfished and disappears, the smaller fish it used to eat can become too many, which may then over-eat their food, and so on.

A habitat is the place where an organism lives and finds food and shelter. In the ocean, habitats include coral reefs, kelp forests, and mangroves. Many marine animals depend on these habitats. If overfished or destroyed, these habitats can collapse, affecting many species.

### Causes of overfishing

Overfishing is mainly caused by human activities:

- **Industrial fishing:** Large fishing boats catch huge amounts of fish, often using destructive methods like bottom trawling.
- **Bycatch:** This is fish or other sea creatures that get caught unintentionally. For example, nets set for tuna might also catch turtles, sharks, or dolphins. Bycatch is often thrown back dead.
- **Illegal and unregulated fishing:** Some people fish without permission or ignore rules (like fishing in protected areas). This adds to overfishing and is hard to control.
- **Destructive gear:** Certain fishing gear like bottom trawls or dynamite kills all sea life in the area and damages the seafloor and coral reefs.
- **Aquaculture pressures:** Fish farms sometimes use wild-caught fish as feed, putting pressure on those wild stocks. Poorly managed farms can also pollute the water.

### How overfishing affects the ocean

When too many fish are taken, it hurts the ocean's balance:

- **Loss of fish populations:** Many popular fish (like cod, tuna, and salmon) are overfished. Too few fish are left, and stocks can collapse.

- **Altered food webs:** Fish are part of food chains. Removing many fish can cause a cascade, where other species up or down the chain are affected. For example, if large fish are removed, smaller fish may survive, which then eat too much plankton.
- **Reduced biodiversity:** Overfishing and bycatch reduce the variety of life in the ocean. Species that reproduce slowly are especially at risk of disappearing.
- **Habitat damage:** Destructive fishing methods destroy habitats like coral reefs and seagrass beds. Without these habitats, many species lose homes and breeding grounds.
- **Carbon release:** Healthy oceans and sea grasses store carbon. When habitats are destroyed, fish populations drop, some carbon stored in the ecosystem can be released, adding to climate change.

### Impacts on people and communities

Overfishing doesn't just affect fish—it affects people too. Many communities rely on the ocean for food, culture, and jobs:

- **Food security:** Over a billion people depend on fish as a main source of protein. If fish stocks collapse, seafood can become scarce and expensive.
- **Livelihoods:** Millions of people work in fishing and related industries. If fish are overfished, these jobs disappear and economies can suffer.
- **Cultural impacts:** Fishing is a tradition for many coastal communities and Indigenous peoples. Overfishing can break traditions and ways of life.
- **Economic costs:** Declining fisheries can cost communities money in lost income, and governments may need to pay for enforcement or aid to fishing families.



### Recovery and solutions

Oceans can recover if we manage them wisely. Solutions include:

- **Sustainable fisheries management:** Set quotas (catch limits) so we don't take too many fish and allow stocks to recover.
- **Marine protected areas:** These are like "parks" in the ocean where fishing is limited or banned. Protected areas let ecosystems recover and can even help nearby fishing areas by replenishing fish stocks.
- **Gear changes:** Using less harmful gear (like safer nets and hooks) reduces bycatch and habitat damage.
- **Community-based management:** Local communities know their waters best. When they manage local fisheries, they can enforce rules and benefit directly.
- **Responsible aquaculture:** Farming fish or other seafood in ways that don't harm the environment, such as using sustainable feed and clean water systems.
- **Reduced demand and responsible choices:** People can eat fish from sustainable sources, choose species that are plentiful, and avoid wasting seafood. Certifications (like the Marine Stewardship Council label) can help identify responsible seafood.

All these actions help protect ocean habitats and ensure that fish and marine life can thrive for future generations.

### Causes and Effects Table

| Cause of Overfishing                  | Effect on Ocean                               |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Industrial fishing fleets             | Large fish populations decline                |
| Bycatch (unwanted catch)              | Decline of non-target species (e.g., turtles) |
| Illegal/unregulated fishing           | Over-harvest without limits                   |
| Destructive gear (trawling, dynamite) | Habitat destruction (reefs, seafloor damage)  |
| Aquaculture pressures                 | Pollution; wild fish used as feed             |

### Comprehension Questions

1. What does overfishing mean in this reading?
2. Describe an ecosystem collapse in your own words.
3. Give two causes of overfishing mentioned in the text.
4. What is bycatch and why is it harmful?
5. Name one effect of bottom trawling on ocean habitats.
6. How does overfishing affect fish populations and biodiversity?
7. Explain how overfishing can impact people's food and livelihoods.
8. What is a marine protected area?
9. Name one solution that can help oceans recover from overfishing.
10. Why is sustainable aquaculture important?

### Extension Questions

1. Find an example of a fish species that was overfished and is now recovering due to management (e.g., Atlantic cod or humphead wrasse). What measures helped its recovery?
2. Research a marine protected area in your country or around the world. How does the protected area help marine life, and what challenges does it face?
3. Investigate one alternative to bottom trawling (like fish traps or sustainable nets). How do you think it will reduce impact on habitats?
4. Find an interview with a fisherman or community member affected by overfishing. What solutions do they suggest?
5. Compare aquaculture (fish farming) vs. wild fishing. How can responsible aquaculture help reduce pressure on wild fish populations?

### Additional Questions - Answer Key

1. **Overfishing** is catching fish faster than they can reproduce, reducing fish populations. This can lead to **ecosystem collapse**, where part of an ecosystem breaks down so it can't function normally (for example, too few fish can cause problems for other ocean life). Causes include: industrial fishing fleets, bycatch, illegal fishing, destructive gear, aquaculture pressures. **Bycatch** is unwanted fish or animals caught unintentionally. It's harmful because it kills species that are not meant to be caught. **Bottom trawling** destroys habitats like coral reefs and the seafloor. **Overfishing** causes fish numbers to drop and reduces the variety of species (biodiversity). **Overfishing** may have less seafood to eat (food security) and fishermen may lose their jobs (livelihoods). **Marine protected areas** are areas of the ocean where fishing is limited or banned to allow marine life to recover. **Solutions** include: setting catch limits (quotas), creating marine protected areas, using better gear, or practicing sustainable aquaculture. **Sustainable aquaculture** reduces pressure on wild fish stocks and prevents pollution or disease.

## Answer Key Included Office, Google, and PDF Versions

World Wildlife Fund. (2020). *Oceans: Our Future, Our Choice*. WWF.  
Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. (2019). *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. IPBES.  
United Nations Environment Programme. (2021). *Oceans and the Sustainable Development Goals*. UNEP.  
World Wildlife Fund. (n.d.). *Overfishing: Causes, Impacts & Solutions*. WWF.

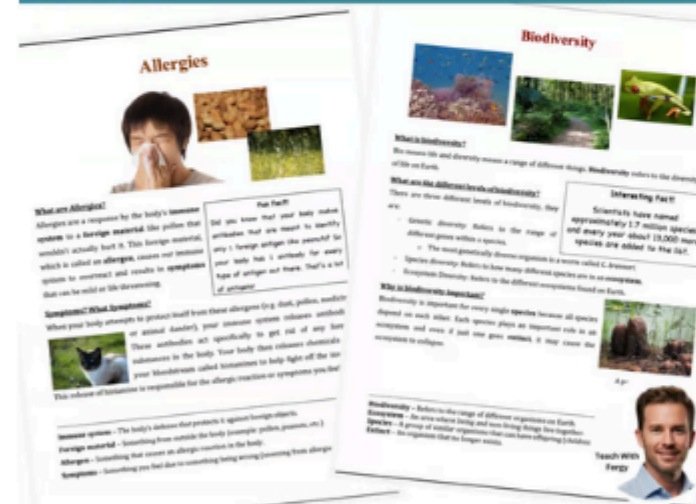


## Comprehension and Extension Questions

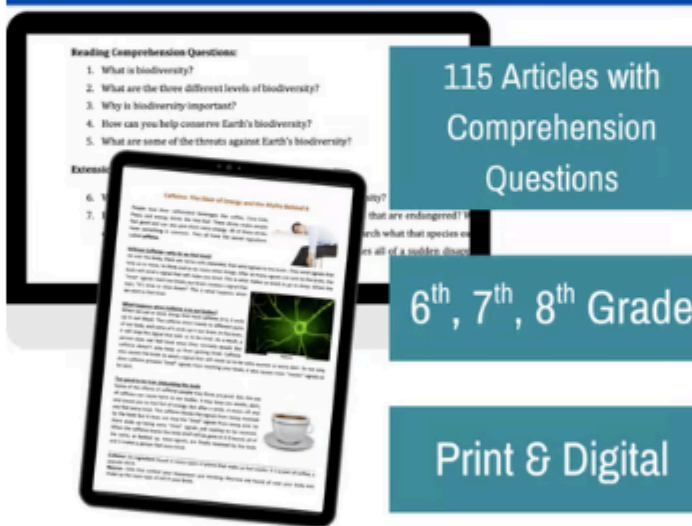
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## CLASSROOM READY

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115 Articles with  
Comprehension  
Questions

6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Print & Digital



★★★★★ Extremely satisfied - So many comprehensive readings for all science fields. PDF and DOCX versions included so they can be edited if needed. Each one includes short answer questions at the end, the first set are easy to find the answers to in the readings, the second set require a bit more critical thinking. Includes an answer key. Great to use to fill in time or for sub plans.

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