

Down at the Shore

Parent Guide

Read the Directions sheets for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY

In this activity, you and your child will find and explore a local maritime area—a river, seashore, or another place related to the water.

WHY

Visiting a place outside of school can help children understand how history and ideas connect to the real world. Learning outside the classroom can also inspire children to ask more and better questions about the world around them.

TIME

- 50 minutes or more

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in kindergarten through 4th grade.

CHALLENGE WORDS

- **canal:** a human-made waterway dug across land
- **lighthouse:** a structure, often a tower on land or in the water, with a powerful light that gives a signal to guide seafarers
- **maritime:** of, relating to, or bordering a body of water
- **seafarer:** a person who operates or assists in operating a ship

GET READY

Read *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* together. *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* is a work of historical fiction about a teenager who saves the day by running her father's lighthouse during a storm. For tips on reading this book together, check out the Guided Reading Activity (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/water/water_reading.pdf).

YOU NEED

- Directions sheets (*attached*)
- Tip sheets (*attached*)
- Computer with Internet access
- Background sheet (*attached*)
- Transportation (*possibly*)
- Camera

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/water/>



Down at the Shore

Background Information

For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/water/>.

For hundreds of years, seacoasts, rivers, lakes, and **canals** have had a big impact on the ways America has changed as a country. Even Americans who have never seen an ocean are still very connected to water. Eating fish for dinner, playing at the beach, ordering goods made overseas, and other **maritime** activities continue to play an important role in our lives.

Life and work on the water—for **seafarers**, fishers, passengers, and many others—have included many big challenges and successes, and even some disasters. On shore, many other jobs are connected to **maritime** activities, like moving cargo carried by boats, making fishing nets, and running **lighthouses**.



Image of Matinicus Rock Lighthouse in Maine.

Unknown date



Fisherman's boots

Worn by a fisherman on the Alaska Ocean trawler in summer of 2007

In fog or deep night, a **lighthouse's** beam warns ships away from dangers such as shorelines, shallow waters, and underwater rocks. Because the exact locations of **lighthouses** are marked on charts, the lights help **seafarers** figure out where they are. In the past, **lighthouse** keepers lived in **lighthouses** to make sure the lights were shining every night. Today, many **lighthouses** are run by computers.

For more information, visit the *On the Water* online exhibition at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater>.

**What does the word "water" make you think of?
What happens On the Water where you live?**

Go explore some water near you!

Down at the Shore

Directions, page 1 of 1

For adults and kids to follow together.

1. Find or think of a nearby site that involves a body of water.
 - Many national parks include bodies of water like rivers, lakes, docks, and seashores. Use the National Parks Service Web site to find the closest park with a body of water (<http://www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm>).
 - If you read *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*, you might know how exciting lighthouses can be! To find the closest lighthouse, consider using the National Parks Service Web site specifically about lighthouses you can visit (<http://www.nps.gov/history/maritime/ltaccess.html>) or a Coast Guard Web site, (<http://www.uscg.mil/history/weblighouses/USCGLightList.asp>).
 - Look at a print or online map to find the closest body of water.

Tip *For an activity that focuses on using maps to find water, check out The Water Nearby activity (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/water/Water_Nearby.pdf).*

2. Get in the car, on the bus, or walk over to the body of water.

Tip *While you're traveling, sing songs related to the water, like "Down by the Bay," "Yellow Submarine," or "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay."*

3. Pick the best Tips sheet for your body of water and start exploring.

Tip *Depending on the body of water, you might also be able to do some small experiments, like seeing if certain things (rocks, stick) float or sink, or find out how far a paper boat will float.*

4. Be sure to take some photographs while you're exploring!

5. Once you return home, upload your photographs to the National Museum of American History's Flickr group (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/otwsnapshot>). While you're on the Web site, take a look at what other people have found on or in the water near them.

Down at the Shore

ThinkAbouts for visiting a dock

1. Use your senses to explore the **dock**. What do you smell? What do you see? What do you hear? What things can you touch and feel? Are there foods special to this area that you can taste?
2. How do you think this area might have changed over the past 100 years?
3. Are there other people around? If so, what are they doing? If not, what other people do you think might come to this dock sometimes?
4. How many boats are at the dock? What are their names? Can you tell if they belong to people or companies? What are the boats used for? Are they for work or play? If work, what kind of work?
5. What other questions do you have about this area? Who...? Where...? How might you find the answers to those questions?
6. Remember to take a photograph to upload to the National Museum of American History's Web site! (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/otwsnapshot>)

Remember to be safe while you're exploring the water!

Never go too close to the water and always travel with an adult.

Down at the Shore

ThinkAbouts for visiting a lighthouse

1. Use your senses to explore the **lighthouse**. What do you smell? What do you see? What do you hear? What things can you touch and feel? Are there foods special to this area that you can taste?
2. How tall is the **lighthouse**?
3. Is it still used for navigation? If so, find out how the lights are used. What color is the light? What is the pattern for the light flashes—how long is each flash?

Tip *The duration, color, and sequence of lights is different for each lighthouse, as is the paint on the outside. This helps seafarers check their location when it is foggy or dark..*

4. When was **lighthouse** built?
5. Can you go inside? If so, check out the view from the top.
6. How do you think this area might have changed over the past 100 years?
7. What other questions do you have about this **lighthouse**? Who . . . ? When . . . ? How might you find the answers to those questions?
8. Remember to take a photograph to upload to the National Museum of American History's Web site! (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/otwsnapshot>)

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Down at the Shore

ThinkAbouts for visiting a river bank or ocean coast line

1. Use your senses to explore the **area**. What do you smell? What do you see? What do you hear? What things can you touch and feel? Are there foods special to this area that you can taste?
2. How do you think this area might have changed over the past 100 years?
3. Are there other people around? If so, what are they doing? If not, what other people do you think might come to this area sometimes? What would they do when they get here?
4. Do you see any boats? If so, what direction are they heading? Guess their final destination!
5. What other questions do you have about this area? What...? Where...? How might you find the answers to those questions?
6. Remember to take a photograph to upload to the National Museum of American History's Web site! (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/otwsnapshot>)

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Down at the Shore

ThinkAbouts for visiting a small lake, reservoir, or stream

1. Use your senses to explore the **area**. What do you smell? What do you see? What do you hear? What things can you touch and feel? Are there foods special to this area that you can taste?
2. How do you think this area might have changed over the past 100 years?
3. Are there other people around? If so, what are they doing? If not, what other people do you think might come to this area sometimes?
4. Do you see any sign that other people might have been here before? What do you think they might have done here? Swim? Fish? Take boats out?
5. What animals do you see or hear in or around the water? If you could catch one, do you think it would make a good meal?
6. What other questions do you have about this area? Who...? Where...? How might you find the answers to those questions?
7. Remember to take a photograph to upload to the National Museum of American History's Web site! (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/otwsnapshot>)

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Down at the Shore

Teacher Guide, page 1 of 2

Read the Directions sheets for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY

Students will find and explore a nearby body of water. They will use their senses to make observations about the area and then share the experience with someone else.

RATIONALE

Most people, regardless of how close they are to a coast, have a connection to maritime activities. Through exploring water-related sites, children will build more tangible connections to maritime history, which is likely to lead to better retention of content knowledge, deeper understanding, and increased enjoyment of this and other historic topics. Because site-based learning allows children the opportunity to use their senses to directly observe, it is also engaging for many different kinds of learners.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Use senses to describe a location.
- Develop questions related to a specific location.

TIME

- 50 minutes or more

AGE GROUP: K-4

TARGET VOCABULARY:

- **canal:** a human-made waterway dug across land
- **lighthouse:** a structure, often a tower on land or in the water, with a powerful light that gives a signal to guide seafarers
- **maritime:** of, relating to, or bordering a body of water
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Down at the Shore

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MATERIALS

- Directions sheets (*attached*)
- Background sheet (*attached*)
- Tip sheets (*attached*)
- Transportation (*possibly*)
- Camera
- Computer with Internet Access

PREPARATION

Read *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* together. *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* is a work of historical fiction about a teenager who saves the day by running her father's lighthouse during a storm. For active reading strategies to go with this book, check out the Guided Reading Activity (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/water/water_reading.pdf).

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Use senses to accurately describe a location.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

- 2A. Examine local architecture and landscape to compare changes in function and appearance over time.
- 4A. Formulate historical questions.
- 4B. Obtain historical data.

K-4 Historical Content Standards

- 2A. The student understands the history of his or her local community.
- 8B. The student understands changes in transportation and their effects.

21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving