

#10092
THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING SHARK: A CAUTIONARY TALE

WESTON WOODS STUDIOS, 1992
 Grade Level: K-5
 10 mins

DESCRIPTION

Norvin is a good actor and a terrific swimmer, but he has a face that looks like a shark. He uses his acting talents and a fake fin to scare swimmers out of Caramel Cove so he can have it all to himself. He is so convincing, he eventually finds himself the love object of a female shark. Animated version of the book by Margaret Mahy.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Life Skills—Thinking and Reasoning

- Standard: Applies basic trouble-shooting and problem-solving techniques
 - ♦ Benchmark: Identifies simple problems and possible solutions (e.g., ways to make something work better) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1.)

Subject Area: Health

- Standard: Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health
 - ♦ Benchmark: Identifies and shares feelings in appropriate ways (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)

Subject Area: Science—Life Sciences

- Standard: Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment
 - ♦ Benchmark: Knows that living things are found almost everywhere in the world and that distinct environments support the life of different types of plants and animals (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)

Subject Area: Language Arts—Reading

- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - ♦ Benchmark: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of familiar literary passages and texts (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, legends, fables, myths, poems, nursery rhymes, picture books, predictable books) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

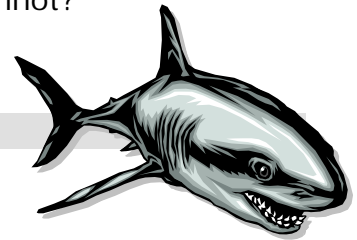
1. To investigate problem-solving techniques.
2. To learn about greed.
3. To explore information about great white sharks.
4. To promote the reading of children's literature.

VOCABULARY

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|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. actor | 6. great white shark | 11. recognize |
| 2. cove | 7. greedy | 12. "sharkish" |
| 3. dangerous | 8. panic | 13. swimming |
| 4. dorsal fin | 9. plain | 14. terror |
| 5. frightened | 10. prey | 15. wicked |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Read the book *The Great White Man-Eating Shark: a Cautionary Tale* by Margaret Mahy. Discuss feelings about the character Norvin.
2. Discuss swimming experiences. Share personal stories about learning to swim.
3. Provide illustrations and photographs of sharks to examine. Ask:
 - a. What are the special body parts of the shark?
 - b. What kinds of things can sharks do that other animals cannot?
 - c. Where do sharks live?
 - d. Why are sharks dangerous?



AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Describe Norvin's looks.
2. Why did Norvin take up swimming? What did he "shoot through the water" like?
3. What was the problem with the cove where Norvin swam? How did this make him feel?
4. Explain Norvin's wicked plan.
5. What happened when Norvin wore the fin strapped to his back in the cove? Where did all the people go? What did they think when they saw Norvin come up for air?
6. What did all the people do for the next three days? What did Norvin do?
7. What did Norvin do when the people came back into the water? How long did people stay out of the water this time?
8. How did Norvin feel when the people started swimming again?
9. Describe what happened when Norvin wore the fake fin for the third time in the cove.
10. How did the people protect their cove from sharks? Why didn't Norvin go swimming in the cove for the rest of the summer?
11. What did the author mean when she said at the end, ". . . he had made rather a good-looking shark and I think he was very wise not to take any dangerous chances"?

Applications and Activities

1. Identify Norvin's problem and the way he chose to solve his problem in the story. Ask:
 - a. What other things might Norvin have done in order to have some time alone in the water?
 - b. Was the way Norvin chose to solve his problem a good way? Why or why not?
2. Practice problem solving skills with hypothetical situations. See how many different solutions to the problems can be found. Example problems include:
 - a. You are about to leave for a camping trip and you can't find your backpack. What do you do?
 - b. One of your friends wants you to go to the movies with her. Another friend is having a birthday on the same day. You want to be with both friends. What do you do?
3. Research and report on different types of sharks. Include geographic locations, eating habits, physical descriptions, other interesting facts, and photos or drawings.
4. Investigate to find out if the information in the story about how to get out of the water safely if you see a shark is accurate or not.
5. Tell the story of *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*. Compare the two stories. Make up original girl-or-boy-who-cried-wolf stories.
6. Recall how Norvin used movement and facial expressions in the video to represent a shark. Perform simple dramas of animals and people without using words.

SUMMARY

The Great White Man-Eating Shark: a Cautionary Tale is about a boy named Norvin, who would make a fine actor, but in fact, has a very plain face that looks much like a shark's. Norvin spends his days swimming in the crowded cove, moving through the water like a silver arrow, and bumping into other swimmers. One day Norvin decides that he would like to have the cove to himself. He ties a fin onto his back and moves through the water wearing his best shark look to frighten the other swimmers. Eventually, Norvin frightens everyone out of the water and swims about to his heart's content. As the story unfolds, Norvin swims out of sight, and eventually the swimmers return to the water. Again, Norvin, who does not like sharing the water, returns with the fin and scares everyone away. This plan works quite well for Norvin until one day, a female shark appears and threatens to devour Norvin if he refuses to marry her. A frightened Norvin shoots through the water like a silver arrow and onto the beach. At least, Norvin's prank is revealed to the other swimmers.

The end of the story finds the swimmers returning to the water with a shark net protecting them from the real shark beyond. Norvin decides to stay on the beach, having come a bit too close to being consumed by a shark in love.

CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [Aesop's Fables #3330](#)
- [Folktale From Two Lands #2659](#)
- [Keeping House #3261](#)
- [The Three-Legged Cat #3306](#)



World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

• **MARGARET MAHY**

<http://www.nzbooks.com/nzbooks/author.asp?author%5Fid=margaretmahy&sku=margaretmahy0140554246>

Learn about the author. Margaret Mahy has been writing since the age of seven and is one of New Zealand's most successful and best-known writers of children's books. The Web site includes a complete list of Margaret Mahy's works and links about her for more detailed information.



• **ZOOM SHARKS**

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/sharks/>

Find out exactly what swimming Norvin was faced with from this kid-friendly Web site all about sharks. Topic headings include shark size, varieties, body shapes, diet, and attacks, just to name a few. Dozens of vocabulary and subtopic links.

• **VOYAGE ACROSS THE OCEAN**

http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Physical_Education/Games/GAM0201.html

Role-play a game in the ocean with this 20-30 minute lesson plan on how to cross safely from one side to the other. Use your imagination and vary the game to fit your class's needs.

• **JONATHAN ALLEN'S WEB THING**

<http://www.j.b.allen.btinternet.co.uk/>

Enter the world of Jonathan Allen, illustrator of *The Great White Man-Eating Shark*. Links include a listing of his illustrated books, "Fun Stuff," examples of digital art, and even an interactive interview!