

Pre-Visit Lesson 3: “Plankton”

Grade: 6th-8th

Discipline: Science

Length: 45 minutes

Essential Question(s):

1. What are plankton?
2. How are they different from one another?

Objectives: Give students an understanding of what plankton are and the main types.

Assessment:

Materials/Resources:

- [Microscopic Life Slideshow](#)
- [National Geographic Article](#)
- [Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Worksheet](#)

Vocabulary:

- Plankton
- Photosynthesis

Lesson Summary: Students will learn about the types of plankton in Lake Champlain. After a whole group discussion using the powerpoint, students will research a specific species of plankton and explain to their classmates how to identify it. You could extend this into a multi-day project in which students would make a slideshow to present about their species of plankton.

Outline of Lesson:

Introductory discussion (5 minutes)

- Ask students what they know about plankton. Some may have a vague understanding, but others will mostly know about it from the character Plankton in *Spongebob*.
- Remind students of what they’ve learned in the past about food webs and ecosystems and encourage students to think about what role something as small as a plankton would serve in the ecosystem.

Main Lesson

- Use the [Microscopic Life Slideshow](#) to give students an overall understanding of plankton. Much of this will be a review, but it helps to give students some additional context.
- Read the National Geographic article together as a group, or have students do this independently. It might help to have students read it a second time as they fill out the first side of the [Zooplankton and Phytoplankton Worksheet](#), which uses a venn diagram to compare and contrast zooplankton and phytoplankton. You can either go over the venn diagram together or have students immediately move on to the back of the paper, which

will ask students to choose a type of plankton commonly found in Lake Champlain to independently research.

- Once students have filled out their sheets, you can either have them present about their plankton to a partner or you can collect the worksheets.