



W H A L E C L A S S

Circle Time Guide

Everything you need, one page per day.

Week 22 • The Five Oceans

8–12 March 2027 • 13 minutes a day • ages 2.5–6, English learners

Water on the floor every day — put the towel down first • last week's globe comes back, turned round to the blue side

WEEK OVERVIEW



Print · laminate · ring-bind · hold this all week

Most of our round world is water — salty, blue, and full of fish. Last week we counted seven pieces of land; this week we turn the same globe round to the Pacific side and find that the blue is bigger than all the land put together. Every day has a bowl or a basin in it, so the towel goes down before the children sit down.

FIVE WORDS THEY'LL OWN BY FRIDAY

ocean water fish blue boat

Littles (2.5–3) — one word + a gesture is a win: “Blue!” (point at something blue), “Fish!” (palms together, swimming), “Splash!” (splashing hands).

Bigs (4–6) — sentence frames: “The ocean is blue.” · “Fish swim in the water.” · “My boat can float.” · “The water is salty.”

Never ask a little for a sentence. They will get there by watching the bigs.

THE 13-MINUTE FLOW, EVERY DAY

- 2 MIN** Magic Box hook — chant, shake, sniff, dramatic peek, the day's real object.
- 4 MIN** Teach — the day's word with the real thing in your hands. Get it wrong once on purpose.
- 3 MIN** Song — chorus → today's new verse → chorus.
- 3 MIN** Game — one named game, tied to the day's word.
- 1 MIN** Close — whisper → normal → SHOUT.

IN THE MAGIC BOX, DAY BY DAY

Mon a bowl of warm “sea water” with a big spoonful of salt stirred in — one fingertip taste each · **Tue** the globe, turned to the Pacific side, where there is almost no land · **Wed** real shells and a few little model fish · **Thu** a folded paper boat and one heavy stone · **Fri** every prop from the week, plus five blue ribbons, one for each ocean.

THE WEEK'S CLOSE

Everyone: “Water... fish... BOAT! FIVE BLUE OCEANS!” (*wavy hands · swimming palms · one flat hand riding a wave · five fingers held up on the shout*)

THEME SHELF · FOUR TRAYS

- 1** • Pouring and sponging — two small jugs, one marked with a line, a bowl and a sponge. *Control:* the water line, and a dry tray. (Practical life, from Monday.)
- 2** • Island and lake — the Montessori land-and-water pair, a small blue jug, the two picture cards. *Control:* the picture cards beside them. (From Tuesday.)
- 3** • Ocean 3-part cards — whale 鲸鱼 · fish 鱼 · shell 贝壳 · boat 船 · wave 海浪, with the real shells in a dish. *Control:* the whole control cards. (From Wednesday.)
- 4** • Sink and float — the basin, a stone, a wooden block, a cork, a shell and the paper boat, the two signs and the 12 sorting cards. *Control:* the water tells you. (From Thursday.)

CHINESE ANGLE

One 汉字 card a day on the mat: 水 · 海 · 鱼 · 船 · 蓝. 海水是咸的 on Monday. On Tuesday the best name of the week — the biggest ocean is 太平洋, and 太平 means *peaceful*: the peaceful ocean. 年年有鱼 (余) comes back for one line on Wednesday; 浮 and 沉 get a hand sign each on Thursday; 蓝色的大海 all together on Friday.

FRIDAY'S DARK PHONICS SOUND

x — “X Marks the Box”. The tricky one: it almost never starts a word, it lives at the **end**, and it is really two sounds run together, *k + s*: box, fox, six, mix. “Six fox in a box!” This week writes it for you: **six** fish in a **box**.

MONDAY · DAY 1

Salty Water

Today's words: **water**

Grab: a bowl of “**sea water**” in the Magic Box — warm water with a big spoonful of salt stirred right in; a second cup of **plain** water and a cup of **very slightly sweet** water for the game; a towel under everything; a jug and a sponge for the shelf tray; the 水 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is **heavy**, and when you tip it something inside *slops*. Hold it up with both arms and let it move. Whole class chants:

Everyone: “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Tip it slowly, one way and then the other — *slop... slop*. Do not shake it. Sniff at the lid and pull your head back, surprised.

Teacher: “Careful... careful... this one is **full**” (*lift the bowl out in both hands, very slowly, and set it down in the middle of the circle*)

Wavy hands, low and slow: “**Water!**”

4 MIN TEACH · WATER

The bowl sits in the middle where everybody can see the light move on it. Say it twice; the second time they do the actions with you:

The sea is **water**, wide and blue, (*both arms sweep out wide, wavy*)

But do **not** drink it — no, not you! (*shake your head hard, both hands up*)

One little **finger**, in and out... (*dip one fingertip and lift it out*)

Taste it... **SALTY!** (*touch your tongue and screw your whole face up*)

Then the real thing, one child at a time, all the way round: **one fingertip** in, one touch to the tongue, and the face they make is the lesson. Nobody drinks, nobody puts a hand back in twice.

Littles do the wavy hands and say “**Water!**” Bigs owe you the frame: “**The water is salty.**” “**The ocean is blue.**”

Teacher fails: lift the whole bowl up to your mouth with both hands and get ready to drink the lot. Take a big breath first. Wait for the shouting.

Chinese moment: lay the 水 card beside the bowl and say 海水是咸的 — sea water is salty. Leave the card there; the row grows by one card a day and by Friday it is the whole week: 水 · 海 · 鱼 · 船 · 蓝.

One fingertip only. Say it before the bowl comes out, and say it again while it goes round. Salt water in a mouthful is horrible; on a fingertip it is the best joke of the day.

3 MIN GAME · SALTY OR SWEET?

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Two cups on the mat: one plain water, one with the smallest pinch of sugar. Nobody is told which is which.

Teacher: “One little taste... now **tell** me. Salty? Or sweet?” (*a clean teaspoon each, and the spoons go in the bowl afterwards, not back in the cup*)

Everybody who wants a turn gets one. Littles just point at the cup and say “**Water!**” Bigs give you the whole thing: “**This water is sweet.**” “**The ocean is salty.**”

Finish by putting the salty sea-water bowl beside the two cups and asking which one the **ocean** is like. They will point straight at the salty one, and that is Monday done.

A pinch of sugar and a spoonful of salt, no more — the point is telling two tastes apart, not a shock. A child who does not want to taste holds the towel and hands the spoons out; that is a real job and it is theirs all week if they want it.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody kneeling round the bowl, hands wavy. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: “Water... fish... BOAT! FIVE BLUE OCEANS!” (*wavy hands · swimming palms · one flat hand riding a wave · five fingers held up on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *Commotion in the Ocean* (Giles Andreae) — one short rhyme per sea creature. Read three, not the whole book, and do the actions.

3 MIN · Today’s song moment — chorus → Monday’s verse → chorus, standing in the circle round the bowl.

“Salty water, wide and blue, / Not for drinking — phew, phew, phew!” (*wave arms wide; three head-shakes, hands up*)

TUESDAY · DAY 2

Five Big Oceans

Today's words: **ocean** (*water comes back every day*)

Grab: the **globe** in the Magic Box, turned to the Pacific side before you put it in; five blue ribbons or five strips of blue paper, laid out ready but out of sight; the 海 card; yesterday's bowl of sea water, still on the shelf.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is too small — the lid will not sit down flat. Chant, then try to press it shut with both hands and fail.

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Shake it: one heavy roll, side to side. Peek in with one eye and go very quiet. Then lift out the globe in both hands, **blue side first**, and hold it up in front of your own face.

Teacher: "Look at this side of the world... where is the **land**?" (*turn it slowly all the way round; on the Pacific side there is almost none*)

Both arms hug a big invisible ball: **"Ocean!"**

4 MIN TEACH · OCEAN

The globe goes round the circle and every child puts **one flat hand** on the blue. Say it twice; the second time they say it with you:

Blue on the top, (*hand flat on the top of the globe*)

Blue underneath, (*hand flat underneath it*)

More blue than **green**... (*spin it slowly, one whole turn*)

the **OCEAN** is beneath! (*both arms sweep out in a big wave*)

Then count them, on five fingers, pointing at the globe as each one is named: the **Pacific**, the **Atlantic**, the **Indian**, the **Southern** and the **Arctic**. Say them once, count them twice, and do not test them — the number five is what they are keeping.

Littles hug the ball shape and say **"Ocean!"** Bigs owe you the sentence: **"The ocean is blue." "There are five oceans."**

Teacher fails: hold the globe up and count the oceans on your fingers — "one... two... **nine!**" Look delighted with yourself. Wait to be corrected, then count again, properly, with them.

Chinese moment: the 海 card joins 水 — 海洋. Then the best name of the week: the biggest ocean of all is 太平洋, and 太平 means *peaceful* — the peaceful ocean. Say it with a long calm hand across the blue. 大西洋 · 印度洋 · 南冰洋 · 北冰洋 can simply be pointed at.

3 MIN GAME · SPIN TO THE OCEAN

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The globe sits on the floor in the middle. One child spins it — gently — and one child stops it with a single finger.

Teacher: "Spin... and **STOP**. Look at your finger. Land? Or water?" (*everybody leans in to look*)

If the finger is on blue the whole class shouts **"OCEAN!"** and waves; if it is on land they say **"Land!"** and stamp once. Go all the way round so everybody spins and everybody stops.

Keep a tally on the board, one mark per go, water in one column and land in the other. By the end the water column is enormous — and that is the whole week's big idea, drawn by them, without a single word of explanation.

Two children per turn — one spins, one stops — so nobody waits long and nobody spins it off the mat. If the globe is precious, do it on a cushion.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody hugging a big invisible world. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Water... fish... **BOAT! FIVE BLUE OCEANS!**" (*wavy hands · swimming palms · one flat hand riding a wave · five fingers held up on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? Lay the world-map cloth from last week on the floor and let them crawl across the blue on their tummies, "swimming" from one continent to the next. Last week's material, this week's idea.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Tuesday's verse → chorus, with the globe turning in the middle.

"Five big oceans, count with me, / Blue, blue, blue — the great big sea!" (*five fingers, held up high; three big wave sweeps*)

WEDNESDAY · DAY 3

Fish and Shells

Today's words: **fish** (*water · ocean come back*)

Grab: a handful of real **shells** and a few little model **fish** in the Magic Box; a basin of plain water; paper fish with a paperclip on each nose, and two fishing rods — a stick, a string and a magnet; the 鱼 card; the 3-part cards from print pack pages 10–11.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box **rattles** — a hard, clicky, dry rattle, nothing like Monday's slop. Chant, then shake it once and stop dead so they can hear it.

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Shake it again, close to one child's ear. Sniff it — it smells faintly of the sea. Then tip **one** shell out into your palm and hold it up to the light.

Teacher: "This one came out of the **ocean...** and somebody used to **live** in it." (*hold it to your ear, listen, and let your face change*)

Every shell goes round the circle, one each, held and listened to. Then the little fish come out: palms together, swimming: "**Fish!**"

4 MIN TEACH · FISH

Everybody stands and we swim, twice — slow and low first, then quick:

Little fish go **swim, swim, swim**, (*palms together, wiggling forwards*)

In and **out** and out and **in**, (*swim between two children, then back*)

Round the rock and **under** the boat... (*duck right down low*)

and **UP** for a bubble — **pop!** (*shoot up on tiptoe, pop your lips*)

Then the basin. The model fish go in the water and every child gets to make one swim with one finger while the others count the fish out loud. Five in, five out.

Little fish do the swimming palms and say "**Fish!**" Bigs owe you the frame: "**Fish swim in the water.**" "**I can see three fish.**"

Teacher fails: put a fish carefully on the **floor** beside the basin and tell it to swim. Wait. Encourage it. Wait longer. Let them put it back in the water for you.

Chinese moment: the 鱼 card joins 水 · 海 — 小鱼. And the New Year phrase they already know from February comes back for one line: 年年有鱼 (余) — that is why there is a fish on the table. Say it once and let the ones who remember it be pleased with themselves.

3 MIN GAME · FISHING

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The paper fish are spread out on the blue cloth (or straight on the floor), each with a paperclip on its nose. Two rods, two children, everybody else counting.

Teacher: "Fish... and when you catch one, hold it up and **tell us the colour.**" (*magnet touches clip, fish comes up, whole class cheers*)

Little fish hold the fish up and say "**Fish!**" Bigs give the whole sentence: "**I caught a blue fish.**" Every catch gets counted into the bucket out loud by everybody.

When the water is empty, count the whole catch together, laid out in one line, and then put them all back for the shelf tray.

Two rods only, and a clear order of turns, or this game becomes twenty children and one magnet. The waiting is easier if the ones waiting have the counting job.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody's palms together, ready to swim. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Water... fish... BOAT! FIVE BLUE OCEANS!" (*wavy hands · swimming palms · one flat hand riding a wave · five fingers held up on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Rainbow Fish* (Marcus Pfister) — the shiny scales get handed round and round. Hold the book so the foil catches the light; that is half the story.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Wednesday's verse → chorus, and this is the one that moves — the whole circle swims.

"Little fish go swim, swim, swim, / In and out and out and in!" (*swimming palms, weaving between two friends and back*)

THURSDAY · DAY 4

Sink or Float

Today's words: **boat** (water · ocean · fish come back)

Grab: a folded **paper boat** and one heavy **stone** in the Magic Box; a big clear basin of water where everybody can see the waterline; a tray of things to test — a cork, a feather, a wooden block, a coin, a metal spoon, a leaf; two labelled bowls or hoops, **It floats** and **It sinks** (print pack pages 12–13); a towel; the 船 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box has **two** things in it and they could not be more different. Chant, then shake: one hard *clunk*, and nothing else at all.

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Out comes the stone first — hand it round, both hands, and let everybody feel how **heavy** it is. Then reach back in and lift out the paper boat on two fingertips, as light as a leaf.

Teacher: "One is **heavy**... one is **light**... and only one of them is going to **float**." (*hold them up, one in each hand, and look from one to the other*)

One flat hand rides an imaginary wave: "**Boat!**"

4 MIN TEACH · BOAT

The basin comes into the middle and the boat goes in first, gently. Say it twice; the second time they do the actions with you:

My little **boat** goes up and down, (*one flat hand riding waves*)

Up and down, but it will **not** drown! (*keep the hand riding, shake your head*)

The **stone** goes down... (*one fist drops straight to the floor*)

and it stays **DOWN!** (*fist flat on the ground, hold it there*)

Then the stone goes in, from a low hand, and everybody watches it go straight to the bottom and stay there. Two words, said with the two objects in your hands: **float** and **sink**.

Little's ride the flat hand and say "**Boat!**" Bigs owe you the frame: "**My boat can float.**" "**The stone sinks.**"

Teacher fails: put the **stone** in first and wait for it to float. Lean over the basin. Wait some more. Ask them if it is coming up. Let them tell you why it never will.

Chinese moment: the 船 card joins 水 · 海 · 鱼 — 小船. And the two words the tray is really about: 浮 (float) and 沉 (sink). Say each one with the hand that goes with it — up on 浮, straight down on 沉.

3 MIN GAME · SINK OR FLOAT?

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" One object at a time held up high above the basin, and the whole class votes **before** it goes in.

Teacher: "Thumbs **UP** for float... thumbs **DOWN** for sink... ready? — and in it goes!" (*drop it in gently and everybody leans over to watch*)

Then it goes straight into the right bowl — **It floats** or **It sinks** — carried there by the child who guessed loudest. Little's just do the thumb; Bigs say it: "**The cork floats.**" "**The spoon sinks.**"

Do the cork, the feather, the wooden block, the coin, the spoon and the leaf. Six is plenty. The surprise of the day is the **coin**: tiny, and it goes straight down.

Let the wrong guesses stand without correction — the water says who was right, not you. That is the whole point of a control of error, and this basin is the best one you will get all term.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody's flat hand riding a wave. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Water... fish... BOAT! FIVE BLUE OCEANS!" (*wavy hands · swimming palms · one flat hand riding a wave · five fingers held up on the shout*)

Before home time: fold one paper boat with each child who wants one, and write their name on the sail. They go home tonight and come back tomorrow for the last game — a boat with a name on it is a boat that gets remembered.

Got 3 spare minutes? *Who Sank the Boat?* (Pamela Allen) — a cow, a donkey, a sheep, a pig and a tiny mouse get into one boat. They will shout the answer at you on the last page.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Thursday's verse → chorus, with the paper boat riding the basin in the middle. "My boat floats — it will not sink, / Up and down — quick as a wink!" (*flat hand riding steady; hand up, hand down, one big wink*)

FRIDAY · DAY 5

Five Blue Ribbons + Big Review

Today's words: **blue** — and **ocean** · **water** · **fish** · **boat**, the whole week

Grab: every prop from the week packed into the box — the bowl, the globe, the shells, the paper boat and the stone — plus **five blue ribbons**, one for each ocean; the awards (print pack page 17); the 蓝 card; space to run.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box comes out bulging and will not quite shut.

Teacher: "Today the box is FULL — it's got our whole WEEK inside it!"

Pull each thing out and hold it up in complete silence. They will supply the word before you can.

The bowl of sea water → **"Water!"** The globe → **"Ocean!"** The shells and the little fish → **"Fish!"** The paper boat → **"Boat!"**

Last of all, right at the bottom, five long ribbons. Pull them out slowly, one after another, and let them fall across the circle. **"BLUE!"**

4 MIN TEACH · BLUE, THEN THE WHOLE WEEK

Everybody stands. We tell the whole week with our bodies, twice — slow, then fast:

Water in my hands — it's salty! (*cup both hands, then screw your face up*)

A big blue **ocean**, round the world, (*hug the invisible globe and turn on the spot*)

Little **fish** go swimming under, (*swimming palms, low down*)

And my **boat** floats on the top, (*one flat hand riding high*)

BLUE, blue, blue — and STOP! (*three big waves, then everybody freezes*)

Then the colour itself, out loud and round the room: everybody finds **one blue thing** they can touch, puts a hand on it and holds still until every child has found one. Then all together: **"Blue!"**

Littles do the five gestures and shout the five words. Bigs owe you a whole sentence each: **"The ocean is blue."** **"Fish swim in the water."** **"My boat can float."**

Teacher fails: put your hand proudly on something bright **red** and announce "Blue!" Look very pleased. Do it again with something yellow. Let them drag you to something actually blue.

Chinese moment: the 蓝 card completes the row — 水 · 海 · 鱼 · 船 · 蓝, the whole week on the mat. Say 蓝色的大海 once, all together, with the big wave arms. Then hold up the globe one last time: 太平洋 — the peaceful ocean, the biggest one there is.

3 MIN GAME · FIVE OCEAN RIBBONS

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" Five children stand well spread out, each holding one blue ribbon high — and each one **is** an ocean. Name them as they take their ribbon: Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Southern, Arctic.

Teacher: "Everybody else — you are the **fish**. Swim between the oceans... and when I say **STOP**, freeze!" (*the five ribbon-holders wave them slowly over the swimmers' heads*)

Swim, freeze, swim, freeze. On each freeze, point at the nearest ribbon and the whole class shouts that ocean's name. Then swap: five new children take the ribbons.

Last round, everybody freezes and you count the ribbons out loud together, pointing — **one, two, three, four, five**. Five oceans, counted on five blue ribbons. That is the week, finished.

Nobody is ever out and nobody is caught. The ribbons are held **up**, never trailed on the floor — say it once before you start and it will not become a skipping rope.

1 MIN CLOSE + AWARDS

Every child gets a "You are a STAR!" award to take home. Then, standing with the ribbons still up, all five gestures:

Everyone: "Water... fish... BOAT! FIVE BLUE OCEANS!" (*wavy hands · swimming palms · one flat hand riding a wave · five fingers held up, and the ribbons thrown high on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? Everybody on their backs on the floor with the lights low, waving the ribbons slowly overhead while you sing the chorus once, quietly. It looks exactly like being under the sea, and it costs nothing.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — Friday's verse, then the **WHOLE** song, top to bottom, with the five blue ribbons held up round the circle.

"Water, ocean, fish and boat, / On the big blue sea we float!" (*cup hands · hug the world · swim · float a flat hand; everybody sways together*)

SONGBOOK

★ “Five Blue Oceans”

C (0003) F (2010) G7 (0212) Am (2000) · Strum: Down · Down · Down-Up (“splash — splash — splash-a”)

Rolling and unhurried, like a swell, with a big rest before the last “STOP!” so the freeze lands clean. **Am is new this week** and it is the kindest shape on the instrument — one finger, second fret of the string nearest your face, everything else open, and from C it is a single finger's move. It turns up once, on “fish swim under”, and that darker sound under the water is exactly why it is there. Every verse is still just C and G7.

CHORUS — EVERY SINGLE DAY

- C Splash, splash, splash — the F ocean is C blue! (*big wave arms*)
F Five big C oceans — one, G7 two... C phew! (*count on your fingers*)
Am Fish swim under and F boats float on C top, (*swimming palms low / one flat hand riding high*)
F Splash, C splash, splash — and G7 STOP! C (*everybody freezes*)

MONDAY · WATER

- C Salty water, wide and blue,
G7 Not for drinking — C phew, phew, phew!

TUESDAY · OCEAN

- C Five big oceans, count with me,
G7 Blue, blue, blue — C the great big sea!

WEDNESDAY · FISH

- C Little fish go swim, swim, swim,
G7 In and out C and out and in!

THURSDAY · BOAT

- C My boat floats — it will not sink,
G7 Up and down — C quick as a wink!

FRIDAY · ALL OF IT

- C Water, ocean, fish and boat,
G7 On the big blue sea C we float!

Each day: chorus → today's verse → chorus. Friday: sing the whole thing top to bottom with the five blue ribbons held up round the circle — that run-through is the review of the week. If your fingers get stuck, put the uke down, give one child the bowl to hold and do the finger-play instead; the waves and the freeze carry the meaning either way.