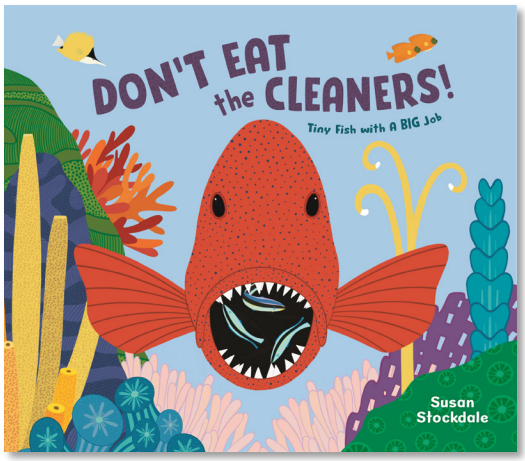
PEACHTREE

# EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Grades PreK–3

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## *Don't Eat the Cleaners!*
### *Tiny Fish with a Big Job*

Written and illustrated by **Susan Stockdale**

"A **striking demonstration** of cooperation in the natural world."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"[A] **lively book**. . . . Children . . . can gather plenty of detail for reports and enjoyment from Stockdale's cheery explainer."—*Booklist*

## TOPICS AND THEMES

**coral reefs | habitats | ecosystems | ocean animals | symbiotic relationships | mutualism | teamwork**

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**Even though they live underwater, ocean animals have to get clean, just like we do. But they get it done in a weird and wonderful way.**

Just like you have to take a bath and brush your teeth, fish also have basic hygiene practices they must follow every day. But their approach to cleanliness doesn't just take place underwater—it involves a network of larger ocean animals washed by small fish and shrimp called cleaners at coral reef cleaning stations around the world.

Cleaners remove pesky parasites from their customers in return for a tasty meal, serving up to 2,000 customers a day. Sea turtles, manta rays, and even sharks line up for a scrubbing in the busy stations, just like at a car wash. Some customers return 100 times daily. And they must remember the important rule if they want a washing by the cleaning crew: DON'T EAT THE CLEANERS!

In her latest nonfiction work, award-winning author-illustrator Susan Stockdale once again proves her talent in creating engaging and entertaining nature books for young readers.

## BEFORE YOU READ

- Discuss with students what they already know (or think they know) about coral reefs. How do they know this information? Ask if they have any direct experience on or near a coral reef.
- Introduce the term *ecosystem*. Explain that a coral reef is an ecosystem that consists of a community of organisms together in their physical environment. Coral reefs form a home that provides shelter and food to many different animals in the ocean.
- Begin by creating a class K-W-L chart. (If your students can work independently, distribute K-W-L charts for them to complete, incorporating both the information gathered as a class and on their own.) Before reading, gather student ideas for the K column (what we **know** or think we know about coral reefs). Do the same for the W column (what we **wonder** or **want** to know about coral reefs).

| **K**<br>*What we **know***<br>*(or think we know)* | **W**<br>*What we **wonder***<br>*(or want to know)* | **L**<br><br>What we ***learned*** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| What do we still wonder?<br>What do we want to learn<br>more about? | | |

- Read the book's title and ask students to look closely at the cover illustration. What do they think this book is about? Based on clues in the title and the art, do they think it's a fiction book or a nonfiction book? Why?

## AS YOU READ

- Read this book aloud to your class a few times. The first time, read without stopping and restarting so students "receive" the information. On the second read, linger on the pages and invite students to pay attention to coral reefs as a specific ecosystem or home. Ask: What animals live there? How is shelter and food provided? How are coral reefs a unique *ecosystem*? How do they differ from other ecosystems?
- This book introduces the concept of *symbiotic relationships*, highlighting the idea of collaboration and teamwork to achieve a common goal. Choose one of these activities to help students understand this concept:

  Ask students to think about a job or task they couldn't do on their own. Make a list of student responses. Then ask what they needed from another person to accomplish that task.

  ***OR***

  Ask students to think of a time when they had to ask a friend, sister/brother, or adult for help. Have students share their responses. Then ask: How did you help each other? What were the rewards? What did it feel like for both of you?

  ***OR***

  Show students this list of activities that require a symbiotic relationship. Discuss what the activities have in common and what the job and goal is for each person involved:

  *playing tennis*
  *having a conversation*
  *arm wrestling*
  *talking on a phone*
  *playing chess*
  *bathing a large, squirmy animal*
  *playing a game of catch*
  *lifting a heavy object*
  *playing frisbee*
  *dancing the tango*

- While rereading the book, call attention to examples of symbiotic relationships found on coral reefs. Ask students to note additional examples. What are the animals' jobs in these relationships? What are the rewards or benefits the animals receive?
- This book includes many fascinating facts about coral reef residents. Encourage your students to pay attention to what fascinates, intrigues, and makes them chuckle in delight. Ask them to remember the pages with written or visual information they'd like to discuss with their classmates.

## AFTER YOU READ

- Ask students to share the page that most intrigued them in the book. What did they learn? What was fascinating? Encourage them to discuss what they learned from both the words and the illustrations. How did the author/illustrator capture their attention?
- Revisit the class K-W-L chart. Review ideas in the **K** column and place a star next to any known information that was confirmed in the book. If they learned that a **K** idea wasn't true or was misinformation, cross it out. Then review the **W** column of wonder/want to know statements. Were any of these wonderings answered in this book? If so, write down the answers. Now, discuss what to put in the **L** column. What did the students learn about coral reefs? This could also include what they learned about symbiotic relationships in a coral reef ecosystem. And finally, remind students that one book can't teach us everything about a topic. In fact, it might make us curious to learn more. At the bottom of the chart, make a list of what students still wonder about coral reefs and symbiotic relationships. These can be listed as curiosity questions or curiosity statements.
- Take another look at the book's cover. Ask students what they think of the book title now. How do the title and the cover art capture what the book is about? Is this book fiction or nonfiction? How can you tell?
- Animals that live in a coral reef habitat have many jobs. In this book the author compares the jobs of the coral reef dwellers to jobs that humans perform. These include many kinds of cleaners: Teeth cleaners are like dentists, body cleaners are like car wash attendants, and cleaners of infections and scratches are like doctors. Which ocean animals act as car wash attendants? Which ones are dentists? And which ones are doctors? What are some other jobs they perform?
- Ask students to identify the pairs of animals in symbiotic relationships that work as a team in this book. Each team member—or animal—has either a job or receives a benefit or reward from the other. Sometimes both receive rewards. When this happens, it's called *mutualism*. This means the benefits are mutually received by both animals. What are some of the rewards for the animals in this book?

## EXTEND YOUR UNDERSTANDING

## \VISUAL ARTS

- In pairs, students choose one of the symbiotic relationships featured in the book. Each student will create a large drawing of one of the coral reef animals on their chosen "team." They can refer to the illustrations featured in the book to guide their drawing. Have students paint, color, or use cut-and-paste colored paper to create their animal. On the back of their drawing, they will write either 1) the role or job the animal performs, or 2) the benefit or reward it receives from its symbiotic partner. Some animals may have both a job and a reward. Once the drawings are complete, punch a hole in the top of each one, thread string or yarn through it, and hang the animals in pairs around the room.
- Create cartoon drawings to show the jobs of some of the animals. For example, draw a cleaner shrimp or a cleaner wrasse to look like a dentist.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

- There are many ocean animals mentioned in this book, including a visual list of thirty coral reef dwellers on the last page. Choose one that interests you and conduct some research to learn more. Prepare an "All About____" poster with written and visual information to share with your classmates.

| **ALL ABOUT _____** |
|---|
| **<u>Facts and Special Talents</u> (what I learned):** |
| **<u>Fascinations</u> (what I think is fascinating—this might be an "Oh wow, I didn't know that!" moment of discovery):** |
| **<u>Visuals</u> (what they look like):** |

- Write a collaborative "Did You Know?" poem with contributions from each student. Begin by asking each student to write an interesting bit of information they learned from the book onto a sentence strip. Model with your own, such as, "There are cleaning stations for animals in coral reefs," or "Some fish change color as a signal they need to be washed." Begin the poem with this opening line: "Did you know . . ." and follow with your sentence strip. Ask a few students to share their fascinating facts and tape these sentence strips under or next to one another. Then repeat the "Did you know . . ." line and follow with three more student sentences. Repeat until all the students have contributed (interjecting the "Did you know . . ." phrase after every three sentences). Then end the poem with, "Yes, we know!" Practice the poem as a choral reading, with each student reading their own sentence and all the students reciting the "Did you know . . ." lines, as well as the "Yes, we know!" line at the end.
- Use the sentences from the collaborative poem to create a class *Did You Know?* book. Have each student write their sentence at the bottom of an 8-1/2" x 11"-inch piece of paper and illustrate their page to match their fascinating fact. Create a "Did you know . . ." opening page and a "Yes, we know!" final page and bind all the pages together. Make sure each student signs their name on the page to which they contributed.

## SCIENCE

- The fascinating thing about science is that it's full of those "Oh wow, I didn't know that!" facts that might seem unreal at first but are actually true. What are some of the surprising or amazing things you learned about life on a coral reef or its inhabitants from this book?
- As a class, create a chart that lists the symbiotic relationships described in this book, which is set in Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Next to each team member, write its job and/or reward. Be sure to include whether the ocean animal performing the job benefits from a reward as well. Add as many rows to the chart as needed.

## Symbiotic Relationships: Jobs and Rewards

| team member | team member |
|---|---|
| *yellow and black tangs*<br>job: eat algae<br>reward: dinner! | *green sea turtle*<br>reward: swims faster, saves energy |
| | |
| | |

- Using information from the symbiotic relationships chart and illustrations from the book, guide students in creating a science notebook entry to showcase a specific symbiotic relationship. Divide a page in half. On the top half, write the name of the ocean animal that performs a valuable job for another one. Beneath the name, describe the job it performs. Then sketch or draw an image of this animal. On the bottom half of the page, write the name of the animal that receives the reward or benefit and what that reward or benefit is. Then sketch or draw that team member.

| |
|---|
| Name of ocean animal: _____<br>Job performed: _____ |
| Name of ocean animal: _____<br>Reward/benefit received: _____ |

- Coral reefs are sometimes referred to as "rainforests of the sea." Both coral reefs and rainforests are *ecosystems* that provide a habitat for a community of creatures and organisms together in their physical environment. What are some other ecosystems on our planet? How do coral reefs differ from rainforests or other ecosystems? Create a Venn diagram or a same/different chart to compare and contrast a coral reef ecosystem with a rainforest ecosystem.

## RESEARCH AND LEARN MORE (FOR OLDER READERS)

*Don't Eat the Cleaners! Tiny Fish with a Big Job* can serve as a springboard to ignite interest and inspire additional learning among older readers. A few suggestions to support continued learning include these invitations:

- What are some other symbiotic relationships in nature?

- Coral reefs around the world are being threatened. One reason for this is that oceans are getting warmer. Additional threats include pollution and overfishing. To learn more about vanishing coral reefs, watch "Corals Under Threat" (https://oceantoday.noaa.gov/fullmoon-coralsunderthreat/), videos created by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, part of its Ocean Today series.
- Become an SRO scientist. Research and explore the denigration of coral reefs around the world.
  S = Status: What's happening to coral reefs?
  R = Risks: What are the threats to coral reefs?
  O = Outcomes: What are the potential losses of coral reefs?
- Use your knowledge to help others learn of the potential loss of coral reefs if we *don't do* anything. Suggest what humans *can* do to save these vital ecosystems. Combine both words and visuals to share your findings and recommendations. Engage your audience through a digital format (i.e., PowerPoint or Google slides, pamphlet, podcast, letter to the editor, or poster).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR THE TEACHER

- You may find these resources valuable for gaining background information or adapting them for use in your classroom:
  - Bizarre and Beautiful Coral Reef Animals (slideshow)
    https://ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/reptiles/bizarre-and-beautiful-coral-reef-animals
    Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
  - What is a Coral Reef? (PowerPoint)
    https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/jkf8ro9k9h30iqybqgtiz/APa1wvxXU_cV5uDqVvYxpRM?e=1&preview=1st+-+What+is+a+Coral+Reef.ppt&rlkey=0qjr21iqyvtv39qqtbbnsero9+Smithsonian+National+Museum+of+Natural+Historyh&dl=0
  - Constructing a Coral Reef (video for upper elementary and older students)
    https://naturalhistory.si.edu/education/teaching-resources/life-science/constructing-coral-reef
    Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

## ABOUT THE CREATOR

**Susan Stockdale** grew up swimming in the ocean off Miami. She was enthralled by the experience, which helped inspire this book's exploration of animal life beneath the waves. She began her art career as a textile designer for the apparel industry, providing her with an opportunity to express her love of pattern and color. Today, pattern and color remain central to her work as the author and illustrator of critically acclaimed picture books that celebrate nature. Her books have won a variety of awards including the ALSC Notable Children's Books, NCTE Notable Children's Books in the Language Arts, NSTA Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K–12, and the Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Books of the Year. She lives with her husband in Maryland. Learn more at SusanStockdale.com.

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Peachtree Teacher's Guide created by Nancy Johnson, professor emerita of children's/young adult literature at Western Washington University and literacy consultant.

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