

# THE DAILY DRIFT

## — BEACHCOMBER NEWSROOM —

- ⊗ DURATION: 1-1.5 HOURS (PLUS OPTIONAL RESEARCH OR PUBLISHING TIME)
- ⊗ SETTING: CLASSROOM WITH COLLECTED BEACH ITEMS OR BEACHCOMBING POSTER
- ⊗ GRADE LEVELS: 4TH-5TH | MIDDLE SCHOOL | HIGH SCHOOL



### TEKS ALIGNMENT

#### Science

Grades 4-5:

- 4.3A, 4.3C, 4.10A-B
- 5.3A, 5.9A

Middle School (6-8):

- 6.11A-B, 7.10A-C, 8.11A-C

High School Aquatic  
Science & Environmental  
Systems:

- AS.9A-C, AS.10A
- ES.7A-C

#### ELAR

Grades 4-5:

- 4.11A-D, 4.12A-B, 4.13A-D
- 5.11A-D, 5.12A-B, 4.13A-D

Middle School (6-8):

- 6.11-8.11A-C
- 6.12-8.12A-B
- 6.13-8.13A-C
- 6.7-8.7B

High School

- 9.11-12.11A-C
- 9.12-12.12A-B
- 9.13-12.13A-D



### Lesson Overview

Students become environmental journalists reporting for The Daily Drift, a coastal newspaper that shares discoveries from the beach. Using real or simulated beach finds, they will observe, identify, research, and write short “news articles” about what they find – exploring the connections between natural and human-made items and how they tell the story of our oceans.

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Observe and describe natural and human-made items found on the beach.
2. Identify or infer each item’s origin, ecological role, or environmental impact.
3. Practice data collection and critical thinking using field techniques.
4. Communicate findings in an engaging, journalistic format.
5. Develop awareness of human connections to ocean systems.

## Lesson Procedures

### Engage (10 – 15 minutes)

1. Begin with a Daily Drift headline reveal (e.g., “Mystery Find Washes Ashore!”).
2. Discuss: What kinds of things wash up on the beach? What can they tell us?
3. Show examples — a sea bean, feather, or plastic bottle cap — and model observational questions:
  - Where might it have come from?
  - Is it natural or human-made?
  - What story might it tell about the ocean?

### Explore (20 – 25 minutes)

1. Students explore a designated beach area (or classroom “beachcombing station”).
2. Each group selects 1–2 items to investigate.
3. Using observation sheets, they:
  - Describe the object (shape, color, texture, material)
  - Record location and conditions
  - Make inferences about origin and movement
  - Take photos or sketch

### Explain (15 – 20 minutes)

1. Provide fact sheets (Sea Beans, Marine Debris, etc.) or digital resources.
2. Students research to confirm their object’s identity and background.
3. Discuss as a group: What did you find most surprising?

### Elaborate (25 – 40 minutes)

#### Activity: “Write for The Daily Drift!”

Students turn their observations into short news-style articles using the Daily Drift format.

#### Elementary (4–5):

- Create short “Feature Stories” with headline, drawing, and 3–4 sentences.
- Include fun facts and a “Did You Know?” box.

#### Middle School:

- Write a front-page article explaining the item’s journey, with a sidebar on environmental impact or solutions.
- Include a “Scientist Spotlight” or “Beachcomber Tip.”

#### High School:

- Write in journalistic format: headline, lead paragraph, supporting evidence, quotes (from scientist, peer, or research).
- Option to create digital versions in Canva or Google Docs.

### Evaluate (10 minutes)

Groups present their articles to the class or in a “newsroom” share-out.

Peers identify:

- What story the item told about the ocean
- What they learned about human connections to the environment

Assessment Options:

- Completed article and observation notes
- Oral presentation or display
- Reflection journal entry (“What did the beach teach us today?”)

### Extensions

- Compile all class articles into a “Daily Drift Newspaper” PDF for your camp or school website.
- Invite local scientists, journalists, or community leaders to serve as “editors.”
- Create special issues (e.g., Marine Debris Edition, Shorebird Special).
- Integrate art: students illustrate their “finds” for the newspaper.

### Resources

- [HRI’s YouTube “Beachcombing” playlist](#): weekly videos
- [HRI’s Facebook page](#): they feature “Beach Finds Friday”.
- [HRI Education Program page](#): provides activities and information for upcoming events.
- Beachcombing with Jace Tunnell poster

# **The Daily Drift: Coastal News from the Shoreline** **Student worksheet - Beachcombing Investigation Edition**

## **Reporter Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class/Group: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Headline** (Catchy Title for Your Story)

Write a title that grabs attention - Something fun or mysterious

Example: "Mysterious Green Beads found on Mustang Island"

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## **The Discovery**

Describe what you found or researched. Where did you find it? What does it look like?

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## **What's the Story Behind it?**

Research or infer how this item got to the beach. Is it natural or man-made? Local or from far away?

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## **The Science Scoop**

Include at least two scientific facts about your item (origin, material, habitat, ocean process, etc.).

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Why It Matters**

Why is this item important? What can it tell us about ocean health, currents, or human impact?

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## **Quote from an "Expert"**

Interview a classmate, teacher, or imaginary expert and include a quote.

- Example: "Finding these nurdles helps us understand plastic pollution," said Dr. Shell.

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## **Sketch or Attach a Photo**

Draw your beach find or paste a picture here.