

RIP CURRENT SAFETY

Spotting and Avoiding Rip Currents

Activity: 1

Level: 5 & 6

Overview

A common hazard found at the beach is a rip current. Rip currents can occur at all beaches; surf beaches and in the bay. A rip current is a strong, narrow current that flows away from the shoreline. During this lesson, students will become familiar with the features to look for to identify some common rip currents and discuss how best to avoid these hazards. Students will then use collage to create a beach scene, using paper to represent the identifying features of a rip current that they have learnt about.

Key Understandings

- Avoid rip currents by swimming between the flags, reading safety signs and checking the water for rips.
- Rip currents are difficult to see. Look for the following features:
 - Fewer breaking waves or a gap between breaking waves
 - An area of water with a rippled, or choppy appearance, surrounded by calmer water
 - Deeper, darker-coloured water, like a path between white water/breaking waves
 - Foamy or sandy water floating away from the shore
 - Seaweed or rubbish floating away from the shore

Resources

- Smartboard
- Appendix A: *Strong current symbol* (to display on smartboard)
- Appendix B: *Current thinking* (one copy for each student)
- Appendix C: *Rip current photos* (to display on smartboard)
- A variety of different coloured and textured paper
- A3 white paper

Activity

ENGAGE

Challenge students to draw the 'Strong Current' symbol from memory. Display Appendix A: *Strong current symbol* on the smartboard for students to check their work against. Explain that this symbol can indicate that rip currents are present at a beach.

EXPLORE

Give each student a copy of Appendix B: *Current thinking*. Read each statement out to the class and ask students to mark their current thinking on the lines. It is important that they use one colour because they will need to repeat the activity with a different colour in Lesson 4 in order to show how their thinking has changed.

EXPLAIN

Watch *Video 2 – Spotting and Avoiding Rip Currents*

ELABORATE

As a whole group look at Appendix C: *Rip current photos* on the smartboard. Ask students to identify the rip current in each photo. Challenge them to justify their answer by pointing out which common features they can see (eg. There are not many breaking waves or there is a darker coloured path).

EVALUATE

Give each student a piece of white A3 paper and ask them to use the coloured paper to create a collage of the beach. Encourage them to reflect on the common features of a rip current and think about how they might use the paper to represent this (e.g. rip, cut, fold, scrunch etc). Remind them that every rip current looks different and only one or two of these features might be visible. These will be shared at the beginning of Lesson 3.

Curriculum Links



Year 5		
VISUAL ARTS	<u>Visual Arts Practices</u>	Select and apply visual conventions, materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to different art forms when making artworks (VCAVAV030)
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	<u>Personal, Social and Community Health: Being healthy, safe and active</u>	Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (VCHPEP108)
Year 6		
VISUAL ARTS	<u>Visual Arts Practices</u>	Select and apply visual conventions, materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to different art forms when making artworks (VCAVAV030)
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	<u>Personal, Social and Community Health: Being healthy, safe and active</u>	Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (VCHPEP108)

Sample Report Comments

{Name} can identify some of the common features that might signify a rip current is present at the beach. {He/She} is able to use this knowledge to make an informed decision about whether or not it is safe to swim.

{Name} created a paper collage representation of a rip current. {He/She} used a range of different techniques to manipulate the paper and represent some of the visible features of a rip current.

References

Science of the Surf. *Rip of the Month*, <http://www.scienceofthesurf.com/ripom.html> [viewed 31 May 2018]

Appendix A

Strong Current Symbol



Appendix B

Current Thinking

Use a coloured pen or pencil to mark your current thinking on each line. In Lesson 4, repeat the activity with a different colour to show how your thinking has changed.

I understand how a rip current works.



Agree
Disagree

Only weak swimmers drown in rip currents.



Agree
Disagree

I could spot a rip current at the beach.



Agree
Disagree

If I got stuck in a rip current, I would know what to do.



Agree
Disagree

Appendix C

Rip Current Photos

Photo 1

October 2017, Stanwell Park, NSW
(Photo courtesy of Dr Rob Brander, Science of the Surf)



Photo 2

February 2017, Watipinga Beach, SA
(Photo courtesy of Shane Daw, Surf Life Saving Australia)



Photo 3

June 2016, North Cronulla Beach, NSW
(Photo courtesy of Beth Noel, Sutherland Shire Council)

