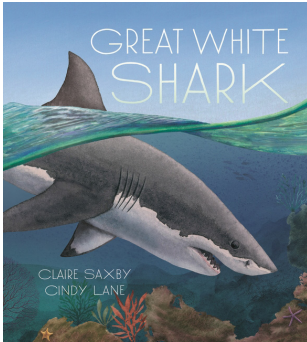




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Great White Shark

Author: Claire Saxby  
Illustrator: Cindy Lane  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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### Outline:

*The great white shark swims on.  
Her tail sways side-to-side;  
her fins keep her balanced.  
She travels the fast lane  
where she can, cruising  
invisible seaways*

In *Great White Shark* we follow a female shark on her way to warmer waters to give her pups the best chance of survival. Set in a stunning underwater world, Claire Saxby's signature poetic prose and Cindy Lane's sublime illustrations showcase the grace, majesty and power of one of the ocean's top predators.

### Author/Illustrator Information:

Claire Saxby lives in Melbourne, Australia and loves her city. She is the bestselling and award-winning author of many books. *There Was an Old Sailor* (illustrated by Cassandra Allen) won the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Crystal Kite Award. *Big Red Kangaroo* and *Emu* (both illustrated by Graham Byrne) and *Koala* (illustrated by Julie Vivas) have won numerous awards including the Whitley Award, the Environment Award for Children's Literature, and Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Crichton Award. *Koala* was a CBCA Honour Book. *Dingo*, (illustrated by Tannya Harricks) was joint winner of the Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature at the NSW Premier's Literary Award (2019); won the Royal Zoological Society of NSW's Whitley Award (2018); was shortlisted in 2019 for the CBCA New Illustrator Award, and Best Picture Book in the Educational Publishing awards. Claire and Tannya also collaborated on *Kookaburra* in 2020 and her book *Tasmanian Devil* (illustrated by Max Hamilton) will publish in 2022.

Cindy Lane is an award-winning artist and illustrator who loves the ocean. She was born and grew up by the sea in Sydney, lived by the Great Barrier Reef in FNQ, and now has her studio by the Indian Ocean in Perth. Cindy loves to make her own paints with materials she finds in nature, and collects waters from all over the world to use in her paintings. Seawaters from across Australia were used in *Great White Shark*, her first picture book.

### How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

#### These notes are for:

- Primary 1-4
- Ages 5-9

#### Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Science

#### Example of:

- Picture Books
- Non-fiction
- Narrative Non-fiction

#### Themes/Ideas:

- Nature
- Habitats
- Geography
- Science



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities:

### Before Reading

View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

Look at the front cover and read the blurb on the back. Try to predict some of the events that might happen in the story.

As a class, brainstorm what you know about great white sharks then use this information to create a mind-map. Use subheadings to help organise the information.

Write down 5 adjectives you would use to describe great white sharks. Come up with a list of questions about great white sharks. Look for the answers to these as you read the book, then use any unanswered questions to guide further research.

### Exploring the Text

Revisit the list of adjectives you wrote to describe great white sharks. Cross off any which you think no longer apply and add 3 new words.

Is *Great White Shark* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? Is it a combination of more than one of these types of texts? How can you tell? Who do you think the book was created for? If you were a librarian, what section of the library would you put the book in?

The text in this book is presented in two styles. Identify the formats. Why do you think the book is designed this way? Read the book using each format separately and then discuss how the different formats change the purpose and alter the perception of *Great White Shark*. Which writing style do you prefer: the descriptive storytelling style or the informative factual style? In what types of texts would each of these writing styles usually be used? For example: novels, short stories, newspaper articles and reference books.

Consider the spreads on pages 16-17 and 20-21. What techniques have the author and illustrator used to express the great white's different movements?

Great white sharks have a special sixth sense called electroreception. What do you think it would be like to be able to sense electricity? How do you think it might help great white sharks when they are hunting their prey?

Great white sharks are powerful predators, but they are in danger from human interference. Reread the *Information About Great White Sharks* note on page 28. Does it surprise you to hear that we're more dangerous to sharks than they are to us? What do you think we could do to help protect them?

The great white in the book might not travel with other sharks, but she is often surrounded by other animals. How many different sea creatures can you identify? What animals do you think the shadows on page 16 represent?

*Great White Shark* includes an index at the back of the book. What is the purpose of an index? How do you use it? In what kind of books would you normally find an index? Using the index as a starting point, collect any other words from the book that you don't know the meaning of and create a *Great White Shark* dictionary. You can also collect words and phrases from any further research to add to your dictionary. Illustrate some of the entries to help further explain their meaning.

Compare *Great White Shark* to a fiction picture book. How is the language different in each? Why have the authors of these texts chosen this language?

### Exploring the Illustrations

Look at the colours the illustrator, Cindy Lane, has used in *Great White Shark*. Why do you think she chose to use these colours? Do they accurately represent the environment that great whites live in?

Great white sharks travel long distances across the vast ocean. How do the pictures convey the great distances that the great white covers in her journey?

How do you think the art in *Great White Shark* was created? What techniques and tools might have illustrator Cindy Lane used? Once you've got some ideas, watch Cindy demonstrate here: <http://bit.ly/GWSNS> (and watch the first half for more shark facts with author Claire Saxby)! Were you surprised by Cindy's process?

### Further Activities

Return to the mind-map you created before reading the book. Cross out or edit any incorrect information then add in anything new that you've learnt.

What do great white sharks eat? Use the text and illustrations for clues, and check your answers in the *Information About Great White Sharks* note at the back of the book. Add to your list as you do further research.

Research more about great white sharks on the internet, using the list of questions you came up with before reading the book as a guide. Create a multimedia presentation and present it to the class.

Make a list of websites which are useful for learning about great white sharks. Make sure you consider whether the information each site provides is reliable, who wrote or manages it and how up-to-date it is.



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities:

Great white sharks are an example of a “top predator”. Top predators perform an important role in the environment by reducing the population of smaller predators and grazing animals. Why do you think this might be important? What do you think might happen if all the sharks disappeared from the oceans tomorrow? Check your answers by researching top predators and food chains.

Great white sharks tend to travel alone. Why do you think this might be? What do you think would happen if lots of great whites hunted in the same spot for a long time?

Sharks are fish. Create a multimedia presentation about the features of fish. How can we tell them apart from marine mammals like dolphins, or marine reptiles and invertebrates like sea snakes and octopuses?

In many of the illustrations, we can see that the great white is hunting around a coral reef. Do some research on coral reefs and the creatures they provide support and shelter to. Why do you think they might attract predators like great white sharks? What do you think would happen if coral reefs disappeared?

Using *Great White Shark* as a guide, create a timeline of a typical great white’s life, from birth to adulthood. In small groups, students could present their timeline as a multimedia presentation.

What impact have humans had on great white sharks over the past few years? How do you think we can help to reduce these impacts?

One of the reasons humans have a negative impact on great whites is that people are afraid of them, even though they’re unlikely to hurt us. Create a poster to convince people that they don’t need to be afraid of sharks.

Most animals have a common name and a scientific name. What is the scientific name for great white sharks? Investigate other species of shark. Find out their common and scientific names, and compare and contrast how they’re similar or different to great whites.

Draw a picture of a great white shark and label its main parts. Also write a brief description of what each part is for.

“Great white sharks are the largest ocean predators, though there are larger sharks.” (page 28). Which species of shark are larger than great white sharks? What do they eat? Conduct some research to find out.

Did you know that sharks have been around since before the first dinosaurs appeared on Earth? When a type of animal survives for millions of years, like sharks have, we can assume that it’s very well adapted to its environment. Why do you think sharks have been so successful? What are the things that make them such good hunters?

Write a book review of *Great White Shark* stating what you liked and disliked about it, who you think would enjoy it the most and whether you think the information provided is credible. Use persuasive language to make the reader understand your opinion.

Do you think a great white shark is a good animal for a pet? Why or why not? Hold a class discussion.

Great white sharks have a dark back and a pale underbelly. How do you think this might help them? Can you think of some other animals that use colour to hide or to communicate?

Find the dedication. Why do you think authors and illustrators do this? Who might the people in the dedication be? If you were writing a book, who would you dedicate it to?

Compare *Great White Shark* with another book from the “Nature Storybooks” series. How are they similar and different?

Create a soundscape for the book using either recorded sounds found online, or sounds that you create yourself. Choose sounds that capture the mood of the story.

Create a new front cover for the book using a different illustration style. You may like to look at other books in the “Nature Storybooks” series for inspiration.

Choose an animal/subject to research then write your own story about it, in the style of the “Nature Storybooks” series.

### Other Great Nature Storybooks From Walker Books



**Python**  
Christopher Cheng  
Mark Jackson  
9781921529603 HB  
9781742032351 PB  
Classroom ideas available



**Kookaburra**  
Claire Saxby  
Tannya Harricks  
9781760651060 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Dingo**  
Claire Saxby  
Tannya Harricks  
9781925381283 HB  
9781760651565 PB  
Classroom ideas available



**Koala**  
Claire Saxby  
Julie Vivas  
9781925126396 HB  
9781760650919 PB  
Classroom ideas available