



# TURTLE TALK

## TIME & AUDIENCE LEVEL

- 30—45 Minutes
- 3—5th Grade
- Optional Expansions for Older Students

## VOCABULARY

- Environmental Stewardship
- Conservation
- Persuasive letter
- Heading
- Greeting
- Body
- Closing Statement
- Signature
- Subject

## MATERIALS

- Electronic device with Internet and Email
- Paper, White or Black Board
- Writing tools
- Optional: Books and magazines about sea life

## REFERENCES/RESOURCES

For Sea Turtle Facts and Threats:

- [www.fisheries.noaa.gov](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov)
- [www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)
- [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)
- [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

For Persuasive Writing Resources:

- [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)

## SUMMARY

How can you make a difference in conservation? There are many ways everyone can help conserve wildlife! One of the best ways to make a difference is to educate others about how they can help too. In this activity, students will learn about sea turtle conservation and writing persuasive emails. For the exercise, students will type an email to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center about how they can help save sea turtles in their daily lives.

## OBJECTIVES

- Identify human-related sea turtles threats
- Research ways to reduce threats to sea turtles
- Learn how to write a formal, persuasive email
- Write to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center about how people should help

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For this activity, students will have the chance to act as Environmental Stewards. **Environmental Stewardship** is defined as the responsible use and protection of the natural environment. As an environmental steward, is it not only important to learn about how you can help protect the natural world, but also to educate and inform others about how they can help aid conservation. **Conservation** is the planned management and protection of natural resources. By working together, we can all encourage the conservation of wildlife.

Sea turtles are a global species facing many human-related challenges

The goal of a **persuasive letter** is to convince the reader to do or believe something by using clear reasoning, examples, and supporting facts.

Today's date is the first text on the top left-hand side of their email. The date tells the recipient of the letter when the letter was written. Together, the date and address make up the **heading**.

The address on the letter shows the physical address of the recipient. Write it underneath the date, leaving a space in between.

The next component is a **greeting** to identify the recipient. Examples include: Dear, To Whom It May Concern, etc.

The **body** of a letter contains the message. This section persuades the reader, clearly introducing the reason for writing, and explains ways the reader can and should help. After the body is finished, and the message is conveyed, it is time to end the letter.

### CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

- How can I help sea turtles in my everyday life?
- What is something nature centers can do to educate people about environmental stewardship?
- What can my class or my family do together to help the environment?
- Is there a better way to get conservation messages out there so people can see them?

### STEM RESOURCES/NGSS

- Classes can take a virtual field trip at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center to learn more about the sea turtles there.
- Videos that educate about sea turtle threats can be used when students are researching how they can help.
- As a class or group, students can plan and carry out activities they learned about to help wildlife. Examples: a local trash cleanup, designing a sign to encourage recycling, putting wildlife hotlines as a contact in their phone, "adopting" a sea turtle, etc.



The **closing statement** signals to the reader that the letter is ending.

Finally, it is time to sign the letter! A **signature** lets the recipient know who the letter is from. If possible, use a handwritten signature, which is usually written in cursive.

With more and more of our communication going online, persuasive writing can also be used in emails. There are a few important sections to review.

Before writing out an email consider the account in which it's sent from. Avoid using personal email addresses that may make the sender feel that you are not serious about your cause. An email from [scute.c.turtle@freemail.com](mailto:scute.c.turtle@freemail.com) is more professional than [cooldude4turtles@freemail.com](mailto:cooldude4turtles@freemail.com).

The top of the email includes the To and Subject text boxes. Double check the spelling of the recipients email address to ensure the email is successful delivered. The **subject** of an email is a brief description of what it is about that can be read before the email is opened.

The body of an email includes all the components of a persuasive (heading, greeting, body, closing statement, and signature). Use a standard professional font like *Arial*, *Calibri*, *Garamond*, *Georgia*, *Verdana*, or a similar font.

### **SET UP**

Before beginning this activity, collect research materials such as books and magazines. Ensure your electronic device(s) has email and internet connectivity. Use a piece of paper, notepad, white/black board along with writing tools to learn the parts and structure of a formal email.

### **ACTIVITY PROCEDURES**

Students will write an email to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center (the recipient) to persuade the reader to take action to support sea turtle conservation. (Please note: The Georgia Sea Turtle Center already practices environmental stewardship, this activity is just meant to help students practice). This activity can be broken up into three parts: researching a cause that deserves a call to action, learning how to format a formal email, and practicing writing a formal email using the persuasive letter template.

#### Part One: Identify Threats and Create a Call to Action

Students should research human-related threats to sea turtles. They will discover that there are many threats sea turtles face that people can work together to reduce, and create a conservation message to encourage everyone to help. These conservation messages may be to:

- Reduce marine debris by cutting down on plastic use
- Follow safe boating laws and watch out for sea turtles
- Organize more local clean ups to keep the environment clean
- Protect sea turtle nests/educate about keeping a safe distance
- Dispose of fishing equipment properly
- Put up signs with wildlife hotlines at beaches and fishing piers

**GEORGIA STANDARDS OF  
EXCELLENCE**

- ELAGSE3RI5
- ELAGSE3W2
- ELAGSE3W4
- ELAGSE3L1
- ELAGSE4RI4
- ELAGSE4W2
- ELAGSE4W4
- ELAGSE4L6
- ELAGSE5RI7
- ELAGSE5W4
- ELAGSE5W7
- ELAGSE5L2



**CONTACT INFORMATION**

214 Stable Road  
Jekyll Island, GA 31527  
(912) 635-4141  
gstc.jekyllisland.com

**Part Two: Learn How to Format a Persuasive Letter and Formal Email**

Instructors should explain the purpose of a formal email and go through each component.

- Have the students look up the address of The Georgia Sea Turtle Center (214 Stable Road, Jekyll Island GA 31523)
- Invite the student to choose a standard professional font, and create their signature.
- They can also choose which greeting they like best. Instructors may want to use pencil/paper or white/black boards to demonstrate correct placement of each component, and ask students come up with appropriate vocabulary.
- Ask students come up with appropriate closing statements, such as : Sincerely, Kind Regards, Thank You, etc. Students should pick their favorite and add it to the letter after the body, leaving a space in between.
- Since students are sending emails, they will need to enter [gstceducation@jekyllisland.com](mailto:gstceducation@jekyllisland.com) into the address box and add a subject such as "Sea Turtles Need Our Help" or "Act Now to Save Our Marine Life".

**Part Three: Practice Writing a Formal Persuasive Email**

Now that students have identified threats to sea turtles, created a conservation message, and learned how to format a formal email, it is time to practice! Explain to the students that they will be practicing by writing a persuasive email to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center about how everyone can and should help sea turtles. Remind students to use persuasive language and supporting facts to strengthen their call to action. They may find it helpful to include examples of sea turtles at the center and what can happen to sea turtles if action is not taken. For example, they may say: "Because sea turtles are often caught on fishing hooks, fishermen should be educated on how to avoid catching them" or "There is a sea turtle at the center right now that ate a plastic bag, therefore there needs to be more organized clean ups to avoid pollution in the water".

**WRAP UP/CONSERVATION MESSAGE**

Now that you've written your emails, it is time to send them! Make sure to inform students that the center is not going to grade the emails, but that this is practice to help encourage environmental stewardship in others. At this point, instructors can include any other conservation messages and ways students can continue to help animals. These conservation messages can include: supporting the Georgia Sea Turtle Center by visiting the facility, picking up trash in their neighborhood when they see it, continuing to educate friends and family about how they can help, etc.



## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

In order to expand upon this activity an instructor could:

- Encourage students to create a poster about the conservation messages they have found and include a picture of it with their email.
- For older students, instructors can have them write letters to local legislators about animals and the conservation messages that they have researched. For example, they may write about better trash disposal in their area or more funds for habitat construction for wildlife.
- Once students have mastered persuasive writing, they can try this exercise with other forms of writing. For example, they could learn how to write letters of encouragement or of appreciation. Students can be encouraged to think creatively and write to people or animals in their daily lives.

# Persuasive Email Template

## Heading:

Date + Address

## Greeting:

Let us know how people should help  
sea turtles!

## Body:

## Closing:

## Signature:

