



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Discussion Prompts- A Changing Environment

Activity Overview: Students will explore and respond to oral history excerpts related to environmental changes and concerns facing the commercial fishing industry.

Grades: This activity was created for students in middle or high school and should be adjusted accordingly.

Activity Directions:

Give students the opportunity to look through the "[Changing Environment](#)" section of the [Changing Way of Life Digital Exhibit](#). The following discussion prompts will provide guidance and talking points to discuss this content with students:

- **Wind Turbines:** According to Rodman Sykes, fisherman and boat owner, what would be the possible positive and negative effects of wind turbines built on the ocean around Point Judith?
- **Warming Waters:** Scientists and fishermen use the things that they see (or observe) in the fish they catch to make hypotheses (or educated guesses) about what's happening in the ocean. Listen to these audio clip and name at least 2 changes that Jim Ruhle and Paul Nosworthy observed in the fish they were catching.
 - Pair share: What do you think those 2 changes can tell us about the environment? What problems do you think that could cause for the fisherman, the fish, or the environment?
- **Regulations:** In her audio clip, Deb Shrader says a lot of the fish we eat in the US isn't caught here. The same thing is true about lots of the things we buy. Check the tags on your clothes right now and raise your hand if they're from somewhere outside the US. Call on students to share what countries their clothes are from.
 - Ask if the students notice anything about the countries that their clothes are from. Possible answers: They're all countries from the Global South/poc majority countries, countries with less regulations/rules protecting workers, countries that were previously colonized etc.
 - Ask students: Why do you think we buy our fish and clothes from other countries when we have the ability to catch or make them here? Possible answer: It's cheaper because there are less regulations/rules protecting workers.
 - This can segway into a conversation about the pros and cons of regulations/rules for workers, consumers, countries, the environment, and businesses.

- **Counting Fish:** According to Dick Grachek, fisherman and boat owner, captains have detailed logs about fishing grounds. How might NOAA use this historic data to better partner with fishermen in analyzing fishing?
- **Sustainable fishing:** It is important for the world and the fishing community to avoid overfishing and maintain sustainable fishing. Organize a debate about the sustainability of fishing and the use of different fishing gear and practices. Each person will research the pros and cons of a different type of fishing gear or method of fishing. Students could brainstorm ideas for maintaining fishing sustainability.

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