

LESSON: Rescuing Nickel

Story Reference: *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Humane Heroes Volume I*, Story 1, "Nickel's Reef"

Lesson Description: Students learn about the life-saving rescue and ongoing care for a 200-pound sea turtle named Nickel. Because of Nickel's injuries, she can no longer swim like other sea turtles or live safely in the ocean. Nickel now lives a healthy and active life in a reef habitat at the American Humane Conservation-certified Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. Her primary caregiver, Michelle, has trained Nickel to swim to a platform to receive her food. In this lesson, students observe Nickel's training and analyze the job responsibilities of caregivers like Michelle. Students then create a job posting for a caregiver from the perspective of an injured animal.

ELA Alignment:

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Lesson Objectives:

- Explore the occupational skills and duties of animal caregivers (Humane Heroes) in zoos and aquariums.

Vocabulary:

- Animal caregivers
- Positive reinforcement
- Reef

Materials:

- Notebook paper for taking notes
- Main Idea Graphic Organizer handout (optional)
- Humane Hero Job Posting handout

Resource Links:

- Shedd Aquarium – Helping Animals in Need
<https://www.youtube.com/user/sheddaquariumchicago/playlists>
- Mystic Aquarium – Animal Rescue Program
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HB1JMufXavg>
- SeaWorld Cares – Animal Rescues
<https://seaworldcares.com/Rescue-at-Seaworld/>

Introduction: 3-2-1 Bridge about animal caregiving (7 minutes)

- Setup: Arrange the students in two concentric circles. The inner circle of students should be directly facing the students in the outer circle. The inner circle will play the role of an animal who is injured, and the outer circle will respond to the injured animal's plight to help them.
- 3: Ask each student in the inner circle to choose an animal to portray. Direct the students to imagine how that animal would act when injured. The inner circle role-plays the injured animal, not telling what the injury is, but by using body language or other nonverbal cues.
- 2: Ask the students in the outer circle to describe what they noticed about the injured animal role-play that they observed. Have the students draw a conclusion about the nature of the injury.
- 1: Students in the inner circle respond by revealing their demonstrated injury and comparing it to what students in the outer circle described. Reverse roles in the circles and repeat the 3-2-1 Bridge exercise.
- Finish the activity by posing the following question: In what ways is it more difficult for an animal caregiver to diagnose what's wrong with an injured or sick animal than it is for a human doctor to diagnose an injured or sick person?

Read and Analyze: Identify the main idea and supporting details (15 minutes)

- Prior to reading the story, "Nickel's Reef," hand out a sheet of paper for note-taking to each student, or use the Main Idea Graphic Organizer handout that is provided as an optional resource. As they read, have students identify and record the main idea from the story and list three details that support this idea.
- After students have finished reading the story, ask them to discuss the care that Nickel received when she was first rescued and the care that she receives now as she continues to live at Shedd Aquarium. Pose the following questions to prompt students' responses:
 - *What two incidents happened to Nickel that made it unsafe for her to live in the ocean? (Hint: How did Nickel get her name?)*
 - *What kind of impact did Nickel's injuries have on her ability to care for herself?*
 - *Why did Nickel require training in her new habitat?*
 - *Explain how Nickel was trained. What made her training successful?*
 - *Describe a day in the life of Nickel's caregiver, Michelle. What kinds of things might she do every day at her job at Shedd Aquarium?*

Guided Practice: Create job posting (20 minutes)

- Tell students that they will create a job posting for a Humane Hero like Michelle and write a description from the perspective of an injured animal. Begin by asking students to consider personal qualities that might be important for an animal caregiver to have. Ask students to describe some of the job duties of an animal caregiver.
- Distribute the Humane Hero Job Posting handout for students to complete.
- If more time is needed, students can complete the job posting activity for homework. The closing activity can be completed during the next class.

Closing: Gallery walk and discussion (8 minutes)

- Direct students to post their Humane Hero job postings around the room. Have them slowly walk around the room and read each posted description. Ask students to stand by the job posting that they would be most interested in applying for.
- Lead a brief discussion on why the students made their various choices.

WANTED

Humane Hero for: (write your animal) _____

Reminder: You are writing this job posting from the perspective of an animal.

General Description: (What does the person who applies for this job need to know about you?)

Essential Duties: (What do you expect this person to do each day?)

Key Characteristics: (What kind of qualities do you want this person to have? How do you expect this person to act around you?)

Knowledge and Skills: (What would this person need to know about you? What are some things you like to eat? What temperature do you prefer? What are some things you like to do? What are some things you like to play with? How do you like to be treated? What does this person need to know about your special health needs?)

Work Conditions: (What would this person need to know about the way you want your environment to be? What will this person need to do to help maintain your environment?)

Name _____

Topic

Detail or Fact

Detail or Fact

Detail or Fact

Detail or Fact