

# Creating and Using “Beach Boxes”

Bring the beach into the classroom prior to your beach field trip or when you cannot get your students out to the beach. To make beach boxes, fill shoebox size plastic containers with beach sand and a variety of natural and human-made materials that could be (or were actually) found on a beach. Make enough beach boxes so that each small table group of students can thoroughly explore a box representing a sample from the beach. Use the boxes year after year to:

- Pique interest
- Observe, sketch, describe contents
- Sort, quantify, measure, graph contents
- Create dichotomous keys for box contents
- Compare box contents to each other to characterize a transect line
- Compare box contents to other datasets
- Pick one object found and tell its story of how it came to be on the beach

## Materials to buy:

- Classroom set (8) plastic stackable shoebox-sized containers with lids
- Gloves
- Paper plates or trays for sorting
- Tweezers and magnifying lenses

## Materials to collect and include in each box:

Sand	Driftwood	Mollusk Shell
Egg cases	Cones and needles	Surf ball
Crab shell	Rubber	Metal object
Dry algae	Misc small plastic pieces (lots)	Plastic Pellets (Nurdles)
Filament line or rope	Plastic packing band	Loop (6 pack ring, etc)
Fishing lure	Plastic water bottle	Bottle caps
Polystyrene foam	Snack/Chip bag	Straw
Toy	Something from another country	Cigarette butts

*Things to avoid putting in the box: Smelly dead things, glass, fishing hooks, sharp metal*

## Student resources:

- Marine Debris [sorting worksheet for small items](#)
- Field guides such as [Flotsam, Jetsam and Wrack](#)



*Examples of beach boxes filled with natural and man-made debris from an Oregon coast beach*



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