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2030 for Sustainable Development

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THE BEST STORIES

I LIVE BY THE SEA

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH
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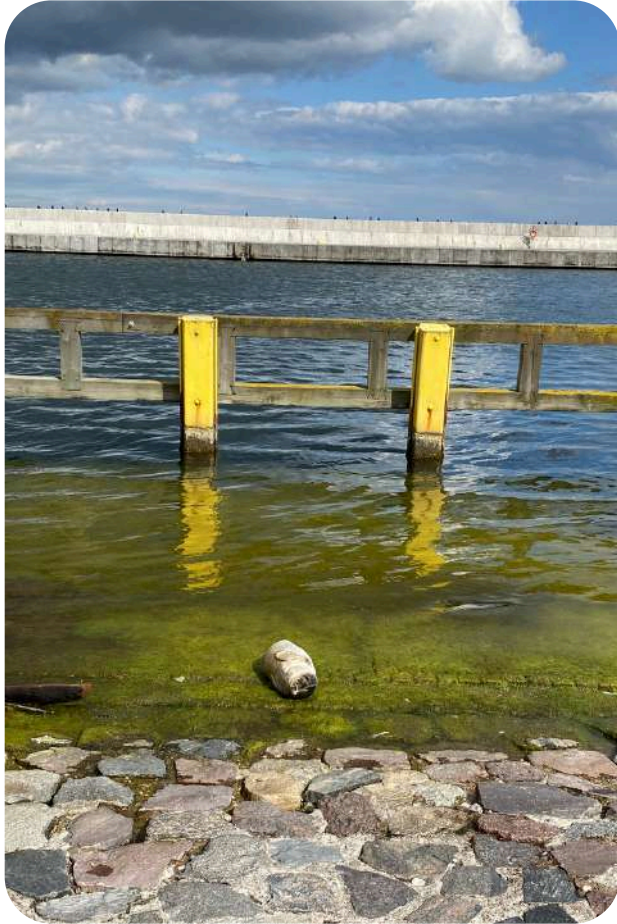
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Seal on the breakwater

by **Lena Więckowska, 12**
POLAND



I went for a walk to Gdynia with my family. Gdynia is a city on the Baltic coast of northern Poland. When we were walking by the sea, we saw a small seal lying next to a breakwater. People were pointing at it and taking photos.

I decided to call for help, I dialed a number to Seal Aquarium in Hel. A lady who answered the phone was really grateful and she told me not to worry about the seal because it was under observation of aquarium workers. The seal was quite young, and it was just relaxing. Fortunately, it had a special microchip showing its location.

I was told not to touch or get too close to the animal. After coming home, I started to read about Baltic seals. There are 3 seal species in the Baltic Sea: grey seal, harbour seal and ringed seal. They are in danger of extinction and there are only 100-500 remaining ones. They are often entangled in fishing gear and other marine rubbish. They also eat polluted fish.

Fortunately, Polish scientists from the Marine Station in Hel at the Gdansk Bay help injured or sick animals. Healthy Seals are released to the Baltic Sea. I visited this place during the last summer holiday, and I really enjoyed it. I even saw a few seals eating fish and playing together. I think that all people should protect their home which is the Baltic Sea.

My treasure!

by **Aurora Zielińska, 10**
POLAND



I really like going to Gdynia Orłowo because I can find wonderful treasures (fossils) there. I find something every time, like e.g. traces of cockle shells. It's amazing that the sea leaves us such treasures.

Lake Louise

by Emilia Cywinska, 11
USA



My name is Emilia Cywinska and I'm 11 years old. On one of our family trips we visited Lake Louise. It's located in Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada. It's known for its turquoise lake, ringed by high peaks. There's a canoe dock in summer, and a skating rink on the frozen lake in winter. It is also a famous tourist resort and recreation center. Breathtaking mountain scenery and fluffy snow lure skiers and snowboarders to the slopes of the world-class Lake Louise Ski Resort every winter, while in summer this picturesque hamlet overflows with nature lovers are eager to explore unforgettable hiking trails and rock climbing faces. It's a must-see to every hiker.



What comes next?

by Beatriz Bolas, 14
PORTUGAL

This photo was taken in Zanzibar, a beautiful place in Tanzania, during summer time. In its charming waters, a sailboat moves gently, while fishermen do their work. The landscape is stunning, a vibrant sunset of colours. When I look at this photo, I am filled with memories of joy and freedom and I remember how lucky I am to live on this planet, while it is still alive, mostly. It is a reminder of the beauty that our planet provides for us. Every sea, regardless of its location, holds a special significance to each of us, providing moments of comfort. So we have to take good care of it. Pollution, caused by humans, is harming the oceans and habitats we love. It is sad to think that places we love to visit, may one day, be destroyed if we don't do anything to protect our planet. The time to act is now, we should protect and preserve the natural beauty that surrounds us.

We are too small by Theodor Weiner, 14 PORTUGAL



We are too small. We have always been too small to make a difference. Compared to the magnitude that the oceans are, individually we aren't much. This photo shows that even though humans are always at the centre of the picture (literally) we are miniscule in the bigger picture. Let this contest and all its applicants serve as a call to arms because to make an effective difference we need to act as one and not as individuals.

A quote that would be wise to work by is that "We don't save ourselves, we save each other". So to whomever it may concern don't just settle for your own good deed but also incentivise others to follow suit.



Me and the sea by Manea Roxana, 13 ROMANIA

I've been on many beaches, every single one of them being identical: either a big piece of land plastered and covered in sand, eaten by the waves created by the currents and people's steps, or, the second version, without sand – a land formed by millions of small rocks. From all of Romania, Constanța is the only region with access to the sea (and walkable beaches) and, guess what? I live here. Today is one of the coolest days of mid-spring. Despite the temperature, I still choose to take a walk outside, making my way to the front beach, right between my school and the actual beach. I walk down the endless stairs which lead to the beach and I jump from the last step into the sand. I resume my moving towards the foamy water. Right in front of my eyes, they rise and fall, the waves, some metal pieces attracted by the distanced magnet, the Moon.



Submersion by Piotr Warchulski, 15 POLAND

Submersion

Sometimes I long to immerse myself
Not with body, but with mind

To touch what's untouchable
To listen to the cacophony of silence
To perceive Infinite within finite bounds

To be alone, yet not lonely
To be conscious, though unaware
To cast off the yoke of falsehood and truth
To be free

Underneath the Surface by Avery Jane Engel, 15 USA



The Hamptons is known to be an oasis for New York's Elite.

Internationally known for its beaches, luxurious neighborhoods and A-list residents, the group of towns on Long Island receives hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. However its marine issues are overlooked often due to the glitz and glamor. In reality, although renowned for their picturesque coastal landscapes, the Hamptons

faces a myriad of marine-related challenges. Coastal erosion, exacerbated by storms and rising sea levels, has threatened the stability of local ecosystems. Each year the Hamptons has lost 1-2 feet of shoreline. Visitors have also contributed to similar habitat destruction, with human activity causing a noticeable loss of wetlands, impacting local biodiversity. On top of that, last year water quality in 30 different locations across Long Island reached a cumulative all time low – and little is being done to remedy this problem. It's important to remember that poor water quality not only negatively impacts appeal to vacationers, but also heavily compromises marine life. Climate change only compounds these issues, with warming waters reshaping coastal environments. Addressing these issues require new coastal management strategies, habitat restoration efforts, and sustainable fishing practices to maintain the Hamptons' marine environment. If we want to preserve the magical beaches of the Hamptons, changes need to be made soon so that future generations can also make forever memories on beaches with their families.



Deadly source of life by Cyrus Harvey Orticio, 17 PHILIPPINES

Desperation is a disease that spreads quickly in the absence of hope, consuming everything in its path. It is dark, like the water being consumed by those who are suffocated by the absence of light. The salty flavor conceals the black water, enduring as it flows through our throats. With each dip into the blackened waters, he becomes a symbol of resilience against the lack of purity. May the stench of each piece of trash floating in our water awaken our awareness and inspire us to take action. As we all live by the sea, we are all responsible for our ocean.

The Cape of Good Hope by Glenn Zyrell Fajutao, 18 PHILIPPINES



In an archipelago of 7,641 islands, it is clear that most people's livelihoods, particularly those of the residents of local fishing towns like Binangonan near Laguna De Bay, depend on bodies of water. As early as their childhood, most of them have sailed with the waves, but as climate change intensifies year after year, will there still be waves left to sail?

Last year, on July 27, the motorboat Aya Express made its last sail in Laguna de Bay. The boat was hit by severe winds and turned over, killing 27 passengers aboard. It may appear that the tragedy was caused by a natural disaster. However, the reality is completely the opposite. The tragedy may have been avoided if the motorboat were not overloaded; as it turns out, it was very much human greed that led to its own end.

Months later, as the people of Binangonan learn their lesson, another tragedy is about to set sail: the death of Laguna de Bay, due to industrial pollutants and sewage waste. But despite all of these threats and hazards, both local and national actions seem to be missing on the horizon. And as climate change gradually enters the region, locals may now be facing challenges beyond what last year's tragedy was; the motorboat Aya Express may not be the last one to sail, but it may also be the last sail of fishing towns in Binangonan and the last sail of Laguna De Bay.

Wailing lake on the polluted Island

by Lorraine Ferranco, 17

PHILIPPINES



Oceans are the source of almost everything that humans utilize here on Earth. We could not survive without the ocean for the air we breathe, the water we drink, or even the everyday things we consume. It is for this reason that the problem of ocean contamination is so critical and demands immediate action. Due to how much we rely on the ocean to survive, we will undoubtedly go vanish without it.

As it is so massive and wide it seems that people believe that we may throw as much trash into it as we want without ever worrying about the consequences for ourselves. Nonetheless, it is abundantly evident that ocean pollution is becoming an enormous problem.

This image is the Kalinawan Island, which is located in the Philippine, province of Binangonan Rizal. Kaliwanan means "clarity" in Filipino, but as we can see, that's not how the lake looks like. Due to dumping of trash and the hazardous waste disposed of by factories around the lake, the water has been contaminated and polluted, making it dangerous for animals and locals who lived there. Meanwhile, the tragedy that lies behind is that in July 2023, where after the typhoon that passed, the motorboat 'Princess Aya' capsized due to the strength of the wind and overloaded passengers which is the reason that led them to this tragic situation.

Waves of Responsibility For Our Ocean's

by Jasmine Faith Salivio, 19

PHILIPPINES



Just as the waves keep on crashing on the shore, so must our responsibility for protecting the ocean's beauty. Our actions or inactions everyday that come like waves, have a continual impact on the ocean's stability. Neglecting our responsibilities has a significant impact on the stability of our valuable oceans. Each of us contributes a crucial part in ensuring the health of the ocean. Let this serve as a strong call to action, a reminder that the decisions we make today will determine the future stability of our oceans. Together, let us ride the waves of responsibility together to guarantee a stable oceanic future.

Land And Sea Mammals Indulge In Play

by Skye Lee-Dalrymple, 20

GIBRALTAR



Nova, a waterdog, was rescued from Spain when she was just a few weeks old. Now a one year old junior dog, she loves to be out at sea. People flock round to see her dive into the water with her eyes open and pick up a rock or two. Nova loves being out at sea aboard Aronnax and helps collect plastic pollution which she then helps to bin.

In these photos, Nova encountered the common dolphins in the Bay of Gibraltar for the first time. It was amazing to see two different species of mammals so engaged with each other as the pod swam in the Med sea inching ever closer to check out the dog. As humans we have a lot to learn about respecting nature and learning to live alongside each other, conserving all species.

This was a magical moment captured on camera which neither Nova the waterdog or the dolphin pod will ever forget!

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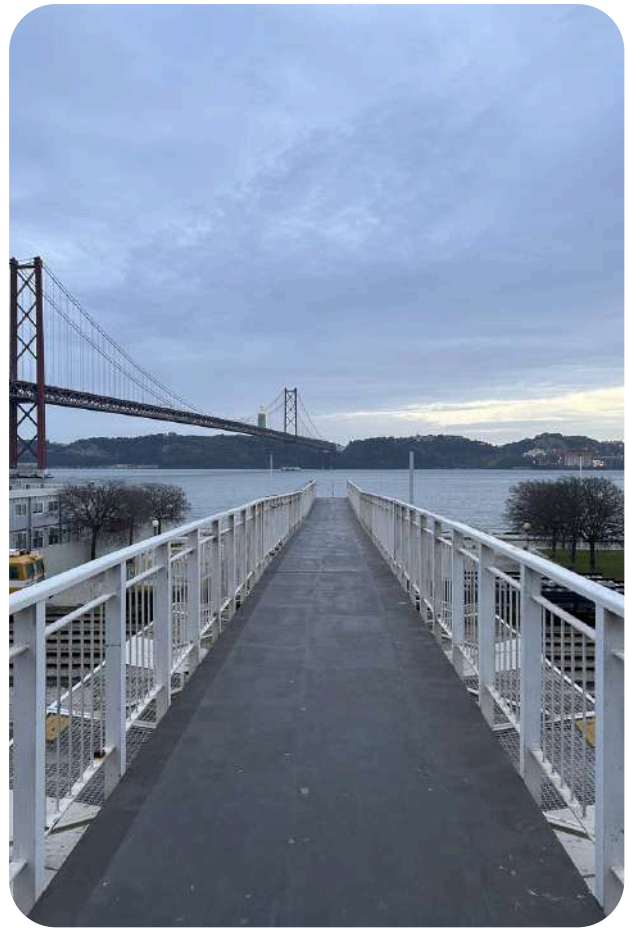
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Bridges

by Lourenço Rio, 15

PORTUGAL

The ocean is a vast expanse, its waves like the obstacles of life's journey. As we navigate this ocean of existence, we encounter bridges, bridges connecting distant shores, much like the connections we forge with others along our life. Some bridges are sturdy, standing even the most treacherous of storms, while others may sway, testing our trust and confidence. Yet, it is through these bridges that we transcend barriers, bridging the gap between where we are and where we look to be.



The enchanted horizon: the Lagos landscapes

by Rosarinho Costeira, 13

PORTUGAL



The landscapes of the Algarve in Lagos rise majestically against the horizon, creating an untouched tapestry of natural beauty. It looks like there is a solitary guardian of the coast, which dominates the landscape. Its imposing presence contrasts with the serenity of the sea that stretches around it.

At the top of the rock, there are a number of stairs. It takes us as an adventurer down to the sparkling and clear waters of the Atlantic. Each step is a promise of discovery.

The sky, painted with strokes of white and grey clouds, seems to play with the sunlight. Golden rays break through the clouds, illuminating the landscape with a magical light. This creates a spectacle of contrasts. The sea breeze carries with it the fresh and charming scent of salty water, with the perfume of wildflowers that dot the cliffside. It's a combination of sensations, where the sound of waves crashing against the rocks blends with the distant call of seabirds. In this beautiful and unique place, the time seems to stay steel, it invites people to enjoy one of the most typical landscapes in Portugal. This also reminds us how magnificent the world is.

Blue like the sea

by Codreanu Alexandra, 13

ROMANIA

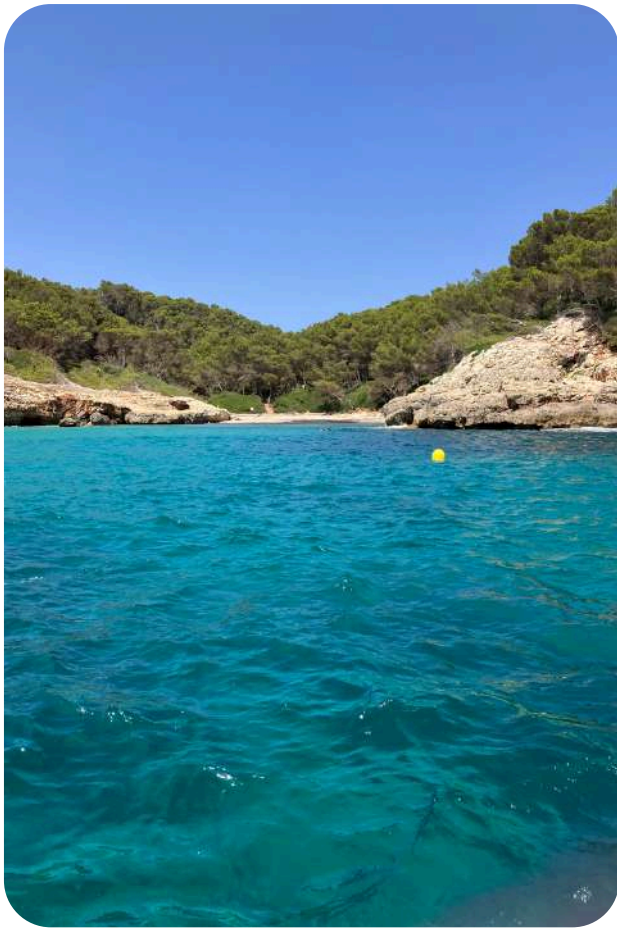


The harsh wind has been blowing for hours and the sky has darkened to a dark and ominous blue. The storm scatters rain and hail towards the old city, and in the forgotten corner from last autumn, the nervous sea throws sharp waves on the shore, keeping away everything that crosses the sand line. While, above the huge blue patch, the strong disturbance is heard everywhere, under the water, a completely and completely different world is hidden.

Fish, dolphins, sharks, they all live hard lives, fighting day by day for their lives, but also for personal survival. Vertebrate ladders are known, as fish swim as far away from ferocious sharks as possible. However, the underwater world knows its fascinating side, studied by divers and scientists. Dolphins dive to the shore again and again, leaving the world on land to enjoy their majestic and triumphant image, looking harmless, but who knows what happens under the water, where our eyes do not penetrate?

The wind stops, the sky gives up the dark blue and becomes a bright and cheerful blue, and between the last calm and warm waves breaking on the shore, leaving the sea to become clear, dreams, secrets, lies, hopes and disappointments hide, mirrored in the eyes of passers-by. The sun comes out of the clouds and gives the water a glow, like luminous stones, floating on the water course. The sea has been keeping the secrets of those who pass by it for years, being loyal to them for life. She saw tears, laughter, smiles, lies and warm or cold hugs. The sea is the best listener, friend and supporter. Will her secrets be kept forever?

At the end of the day, when the sun sets and the sky changes its color to a reddish-orange, thus also changing the warm color of the sea, symbolizing the usual change of the world between the years, only the sparkles in the sea-blue eyes remain, sharing good thoughts after the hard day. The only thing that doesn't change.



The ocean by Jennifer Bhanji, 13 PORTUGAL

The ocean brings me happiness, it brings me joy. The ocean makes me feel like I'm free, the ocean helps me get away from all the problems, without having to listen to anything, just the sound of the waves and the fish swimming happily. Without the ocean I wouldn't be as happy as I am with it, but sometimes people drop trash into the ocean, that makes sea pollution and with that most of the aquatic animals die. But we can stop that, for example, we can clean the beach and we can save animals. Overall the sea is my favourite place in the world and I would do anything to save it.

B.e.a.c.h Better to Evolve And Cause no Harm by Sârbu Alexandra and Ficiu Vlad, 15 ROMANIA

Pollution is the main cause that leads to a bad environment and to increase the amount of natural gas in atmosphere. By water pollution, we can understand that each body of water on this planet stays close to the risk of contamination, and, by that, our life condition could get worse. Water pollution is incredibly harmful to nature. Even though the beaches are evolving in this moment, they are extended by the human hand which causes landslides. Many festivals, like "Neversea", are held there, where nature should progress by its own, without any harm.

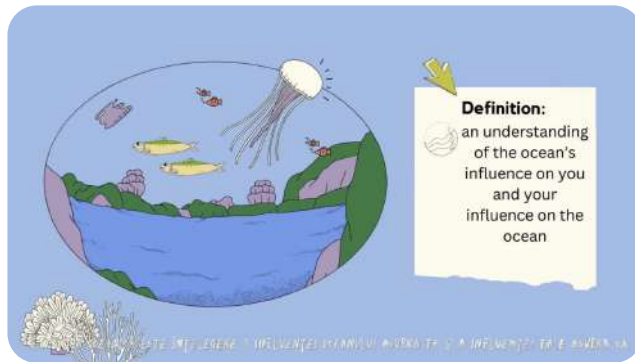
Despite all this, beaches hide some of the best views, just as our photos show, and spending time on a beach represents a great way to enjoy your summer. Us humans have to protect the environment at all costs!



The Principles of the Ocean

by Militaru Teodora, 16

ROMANIA



The ocean is the place where the first form of life existed. Thanks to it we have grown into the society we love and live in. There are seven fundamental principles:

Firstly, Earth has one big ocean with many features, the ocean covering approximately 70% of the planet's surface.

Secondly, the ocean life in the ocean shapes the features of Earth as many materials, geochemical cycles and sedimentary rocks come from the ocean.

Thirdly, the ocean is a major influence on the weather and climate. The ocean moderates global weather and climate by absorbing most of the solar radiation reaching Earth.

Fourthly, the ocean makes Earth habitable since it produces most of the Earth's oxygen.

Fifthly, the ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems. Ocean life ranges from small creatures like microbes to the huge blue whales.

Sixthly, The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected. The ocean provides freshwater, food, medicine and mineral and energy resources.

Seventhly, The ocean is largely unexplored, until now less than 20% was explored.

These principles bring awareness to the importance of the ocean and how much it influences our future without us even realising. Through the seven principles found in the project, the ever present and evolving relationship between humanity and the ocean has its spotlight.



Source of life

by Diaconu, Sara, 18

ROMANIA

Beyond its biological richness, the ocean serves as a profound educational resource, offering lessons that extend far beyond its shores. Its dynamic ecosystems, shaped by currents, tides, and weather patterns, provide a platform for understanding complex ecological processes and the delicate balance of life on Earth. The ocean is a repository of cultural heritage and human history, its depths hiding the remnants of ancient civilizations and the stories of maritime exploration and trade that have shaped our societies. From maritime navigation to marine biology, from climate science to sustainable development, the ocean presents

a myriad of educational opportunities that inspire curiosity and foster a deeper connection to our planet. Through exploration and understanding, we not only enrich our minds but also cultivate a sense of reverence and respect for the ocean and all the life it sustains. In this way, the ocean becomes not only a source of knowledge but also a source of inspiration.

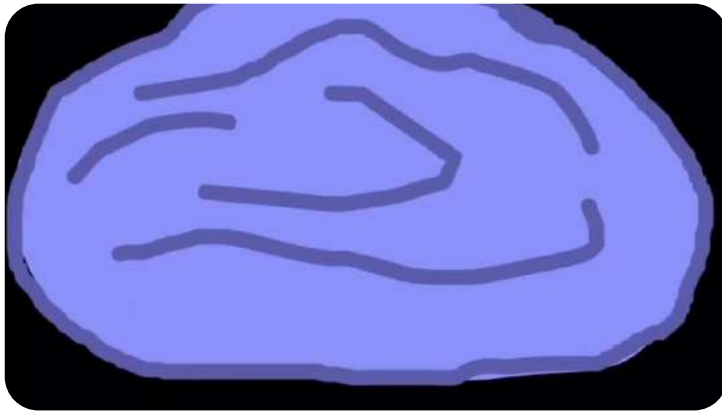


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Ocean Science for kids

by Caloianu Andreea, 16

ROMANIA

The word "ocean" often brings to mind images of vast expanses of water, but its meaning is much deeper in reality. It symbolizes the essence of our planet's history and future, serving as the foundation of life itself. Beyond its surface, the ocean harbors untold mysteries and treasures, shaping climates, ecosystems, and human civilization. Understanding the ocean's profound influence on us and our impact on it is at the heart of ocean literacy. It goes beyond recognizing its magnitude; it involves understanding its complex connections to every aspect of our lives.

In essence, ocean is not just a body of water— it's the heartbeat of our planet. Embracing ocean literacy means recognizing its essential role in shaping our past, present, and future. It is a call to action to cherish and preserve this invaluable resource, ensuring that the ocean continues to sustain us forever.

It is our choice

by Aparu Vlad

ROMANIA



How would our seas look like if we all collectively cared for them?

Truth be told, it is our choice to save the oceans, to protect them from the human-made danger that is modern-day pollution, since the dangers of our industrial practices can be seen everywhere, every single day and not only in the seas, but all around us. This is the main topic of my video presentation, focusing on implying an inherent message through a simple cinematic display of how our oceans were and currently are. For such, it is highlighted that pollution is detrimental because it not only damages the natural beauty of our oceans but also disrupts the delicate balance of marine ecosystems. It leads to the proliferation of harmful algal blooms, the depletion of oxygen levels in the water, and the accumulation of toxins in marine organisms, all of which can have cascading effects on the entire food web. The message is that we therefore ought to stay informed, actively try to make a difference and support policies aimed to help our blue marble. If we all cared for the seas collectively, we'd see cleaner coastlines, healthier marine life, and clearer waters. Pollution levels would drop, making it safer for both aquatic creatures and us. By staying informed, taking action, and supporting policies focused on ocean conservation, we can make a real difference in safeguarding our oceans and the entire planet as a whole. Consequently, collective care for our seas would not only preserve the natural wonders of our oceans but also ensure the well-being of future generations who deserve to inherit a planet rich in biodiversity... Yet, that is only if we do something about it. Hence, it is our choice to save the oceans.