

Underwater Skyscraper

Discussion Guide

Objectives

Kelp forests are incredibly biodiverse habitats. To help students understand that diversity, this discussion will explore what happens when you re-imagine a kelp forest as a skyscraper. Students will learn not only about the residents of these undersea cities, but the complex interactions between the different “floors” of the forest.

Guidelines for Teacher

- Before beginning this discussion, give students 10-15 minutes to explore the website (or assign as homework)
- To better facilitate this discussion, bring the skyscraper website up on a TV or smart board for students to reference in the conversation - or - have students bring up the site on their tablets/computers while discussing.
- Encourage students to not just look at the individual rooms in the skyscraper, but the places where the residents of these rooms might interact with their neighbors.

Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you most as you explored the skyscraper?
2. Which species was most interesting to you, and why?
3. Were there any particular interactions between species that stood out to you? Why?
4. How do the individual residents help ensure the health of the entire skyscraper?
5. Why do you think the creators of the site decided to use a skyscraper to represent the kelp forest? Why not just use an illustration of a kelp forest on its own?

Conclusion

Once they have a basic understanding of the importance of the forest to such a large number of creatures, students will begin to look at the ways that the forest changes over time—both naturally and due to human impacts.