

Ideas & Activities for Early Years Settings




Inspired by *That's not my shark...*
an Usborne touchy-feely book

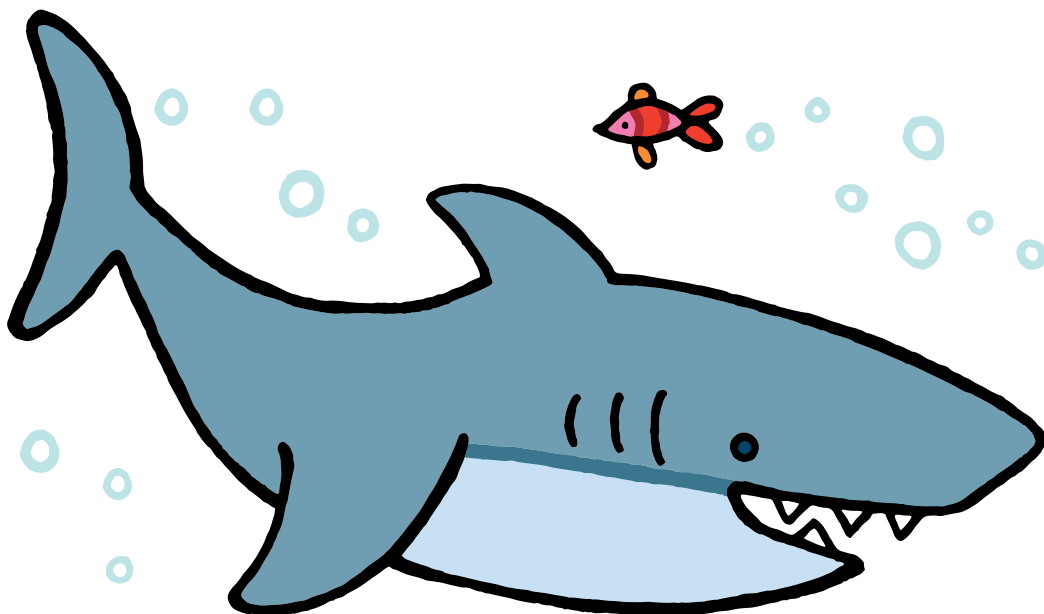
Encourage and support EYFS learning about **SHARKS** and sea creatures with ages 0–5.

A trip to **SEA LIFE** will immerse your youngest learners in a magical ocean world where they can meet some of the incredible creatures that live there – from sharks and fish to turtles and jellyfish!

In this pack, you'll find EYFS Framework-linked ideas and activities to make the most of your visit to your local **SEA LIFE** Centre, along with guidance for before and after your trip. The focus is on learning about sharks, inviting children to also think about the many different creatures that live under the sea and why we should protect them.

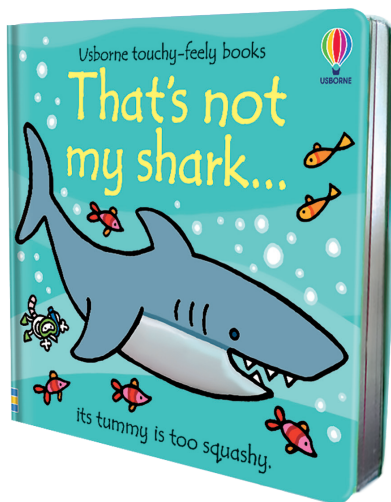
This pack includes:

-  Pre-visit reading activities using the book **That's not my shark...** to prepare your little learners for their visit.
-  Tips and advice for getting the most out of your visit to your local **SEA LIFE** Centre.
-  Suggestions for fun activities to continue the learning in your setting when you return.





Inspire children to learn about sharks and ocean creatures by reading **That's not my shark...** an Usborne touchy-feely book. This book is designed to support sensory and language development and will encourage children to feel excited about sharks and their underwater world before visiting their local **SEA LIFE** Centre.

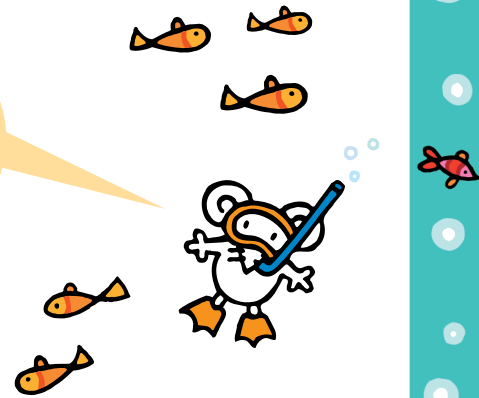


SPARK CURIOSITY about sharks and sea creatures with these quick reading ideas and activities!

- First, **familiarise children with the concept of human bodies and body parts.** Can they point to some of their own body parts: ears, tummy, nose, tongue, feet?
 - **Show children a blank image or template of a shark.** Can they point to different parts of the shark: fin, tail, eyes, teeth?
 - **Ask children to think about how they are similar or different to sharks.** For example, sharks have fins, we don't. Why might this be?
 - **Can children describe a shark's fin, tail, eyes and teeth?** Encourage them to come up with lots of describing words. They can even use the list of words used in the book to help them: bumpy, rough, sparkly, smooth, shiny.
- There are other creatures that feature in the book **That's not my shark...** Can you spot them as you read together? Can they count the different creatures they see?
- **Show children a series of sea creature flashcards** (or images of different creatures they might find at their local **SEA LIFE** Centre). These include sharks, fish, jellyfish, turtles, rays, seahorses, octopuses and crabs. Develop children's vocabulary and communication skills by seeing if they can name and describe each of the different creatures!
 - **Spend some time speaking to children about their visit to their local SEA LIFE Centre.** Do they have any worries? What are they excited about? Which creatures are they most looking forward to meeting?







The most important thing is to let little learners explore and feel curious about the sensory experience and the creatures that they meet, but here are some top tips for how get the most out of your visit to your local **SEA LIFE** Centre with your class of 0-5s!






Tips for getting the most out your visit with little learners!

GENERAL

-  Before you arrive, **generate excitement** by reminding your little learners that they're going to meet some of their favourite creatures, for example the shark that they read about in **That's not my shark...!**
-  **Give your group a heads-up about what to expect.** For example, the aquarium is dark and cool in some areas, because this helps to keep the sea creatures safe and happy.
-  **Let little learners lead the way!** Many of the aquarium windows are low to the ground, the perfect height for little ones to peer inside.
-  **If your class seem overstimulated, look out for some of our calmer spaces,** where there is less sensory input, to let them relax and recharge.

WHILE AT THE SHARK TANK...

-  **Ask children to talk about how they feel seeing the sharks.** Are they nervous? Are they excited? Are they amazed? Encourage communication about the experience.
-  **Encourage children to play a quick game of Underwater I Spy** based on their knowledge of shark features. They can take turns being the spier ("I spy with my little eye a shark's fin!") and the finder ("There it is!").
-  **See if they can distinguish between the sharks in the tank.** Which is the biggest? Which is the smallest? Which is the longest? Which has the biggest tail?



Now that you're back in your early years setting, keep the inspiration flowing by using these five fun and sensory activities to continue the learning and help little ones to talk about what they've discovered about the ocean, sharks and other sea creatures.



Continue the learning with these five fun activities!

Activity 1: My Favourite Sea Creature

Encourage children to think about their favourite sea creature.

It could be a creature that they met during their visit to their local **SEA LIFE** Centre, or it could be a creature from the book **That's not my shark...**. Can children explain why they have chosen their creature? **Create a Gallery Wall of favourite sea creatures** in your early years setting. Discuss with children why it is important that we **care for and look after sea creatures**.





See picture frame template on **page 5**.

Activity 2: Small World Shark Habitat

Create a Small World Shark Habitat for a family of sharks.

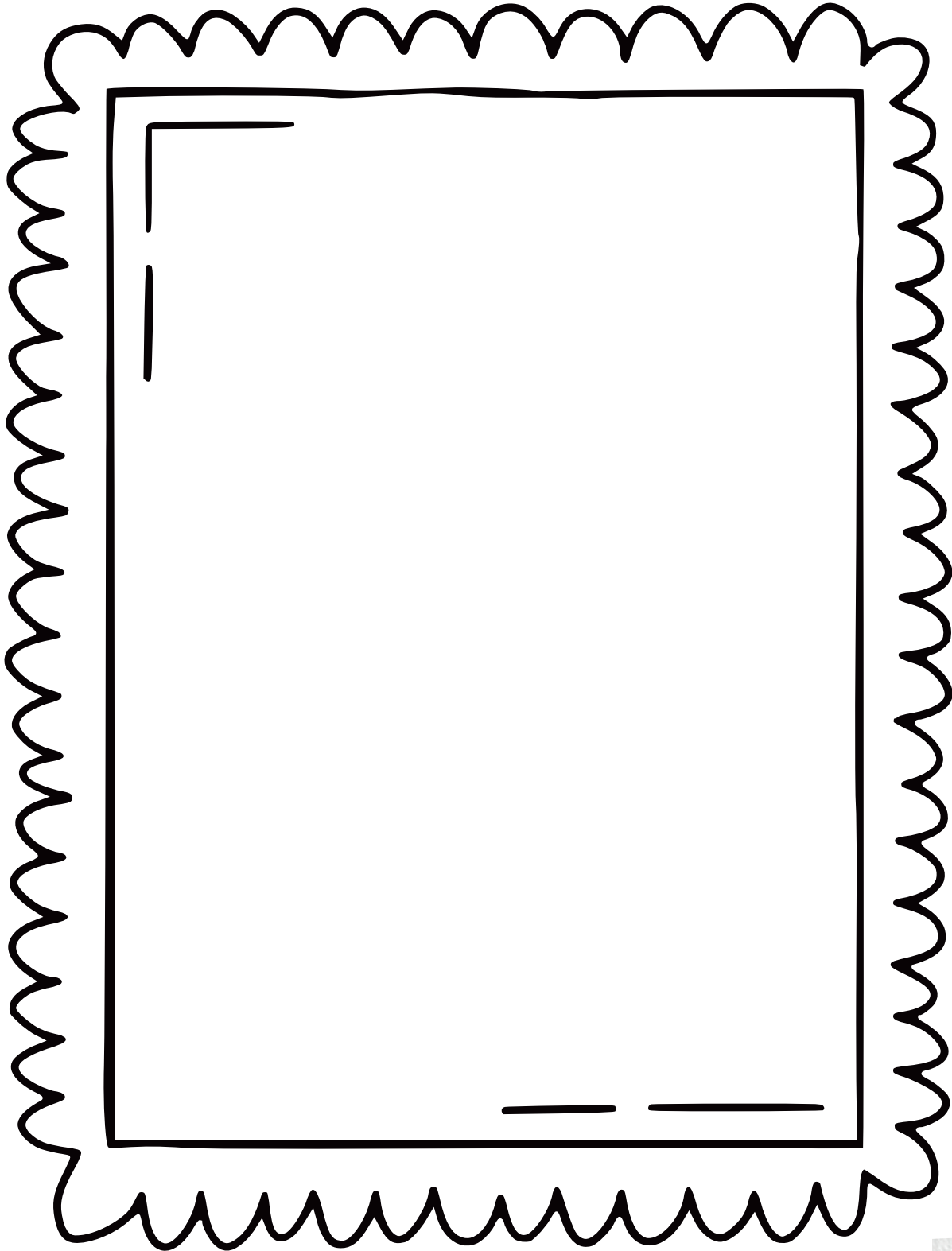
First attach the **shark family templates** provided (see **page 6**) to some card and cut around the edges, then affix them to the back of wooden sticks or lollipop sticks. Line a large surface with different blue fabrics and paper to create a textured seascape. Place strips of green fabric or tissue paper around the edges to represent seaweed and kelp. Add shells and rocks to the scene, as well as other sea life figures or toys, e.g. different-coloured fish. Arrange the shark family on top of the blue fabric. **Invite children to play**. Some might create **imaginative story-based play** using the shark family and toys, whilst others will **enjoy the different textures** in the tray.

Offer children the following prompts:

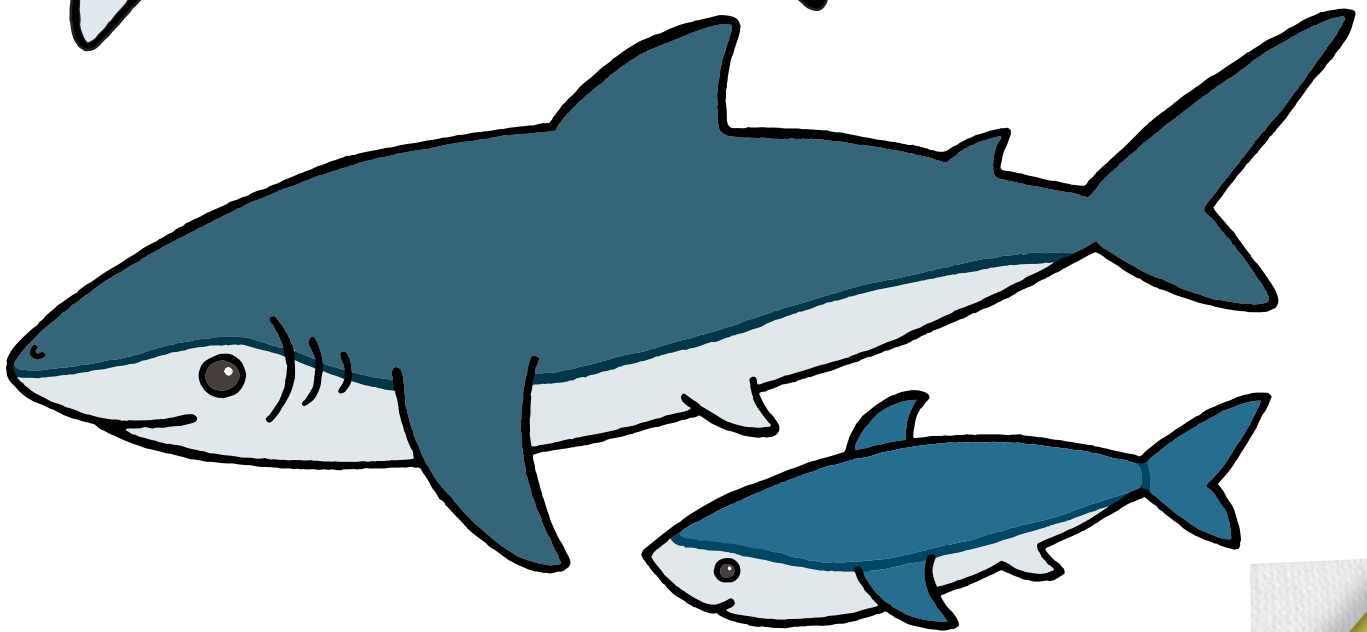
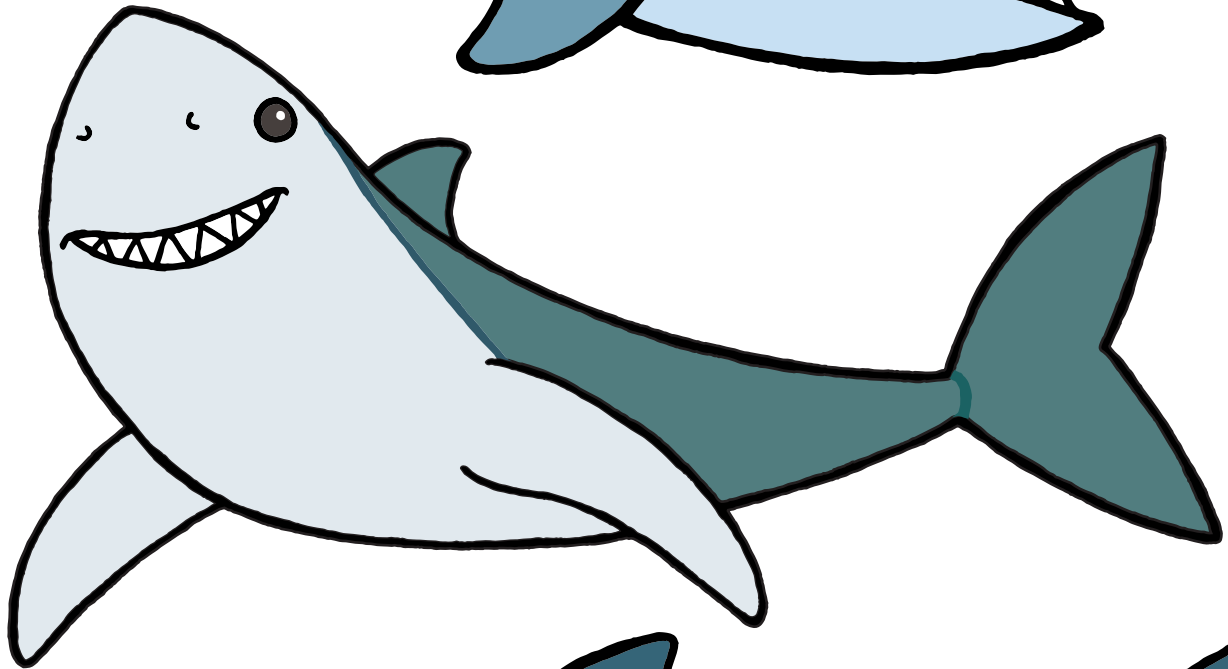
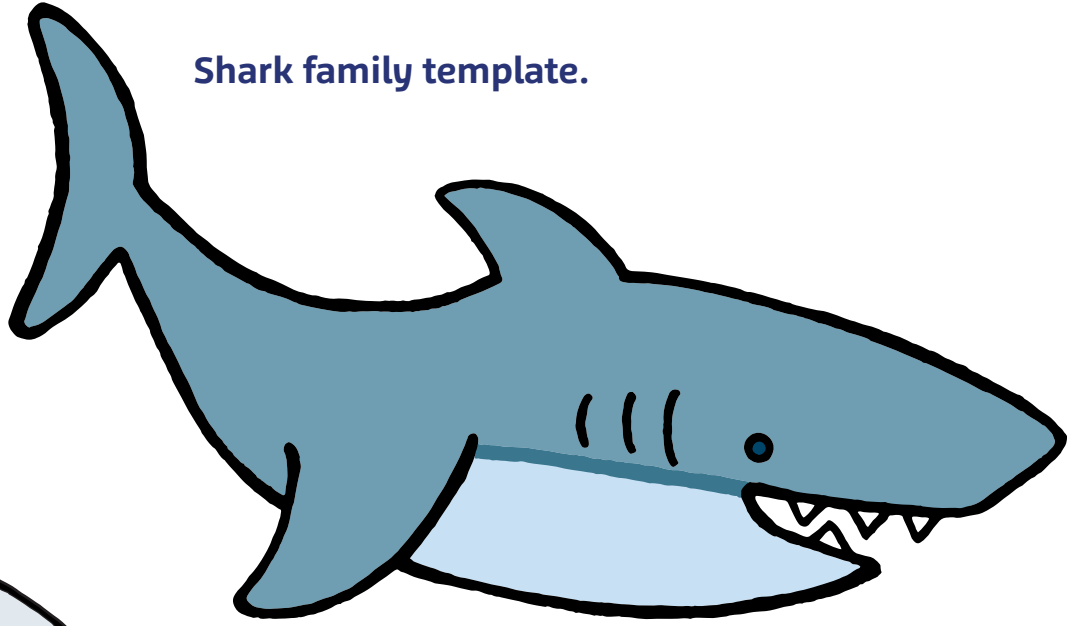
-  Can you take the shark family for a swim in the sea?
-  Can you help baby shark go hunting?
-  Can you help the other sea creatures swim away?
-  Can you name any other sea creatures?

This interactive setup leads to conversation about sharks, what they need and why it is important to protect their habitats, encouraging children to think for example about the importance of clean water.

Draw your favourite sea creature.



Shark family template.



Activity 3: Under-The-Sea Colour-Hunt Game

Develop children's colour recognition skills.

Ask them: **what is the colour of the ocean?** What colours did they see at their local **SEA LIFE** Centre? Can they find they find **different objects in the room** that match the colours of the background pages in **That's not my shark...** Children can create their **own colourful sea creatures** using paper, colours and crafting materials!

Activity 4: Sea Creatures Hide and Seek

Tape 5–6 images of sea creatures to the bottom of a large tuff tray or container.

Cover the images with **different sensory materials**, like blue spaghetti, pasta or rice. Encourage children to **use their hands** to dig into the tray and uncover the sea creatures hiding beneath. Can they identify and **describe the different creatures?**

See images on **page 8**.

Activity 5: That's not my... ®

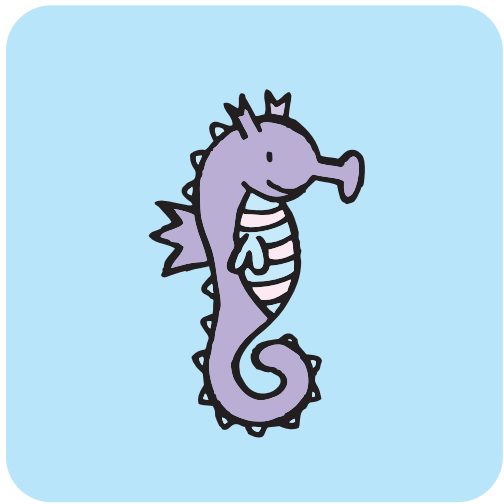
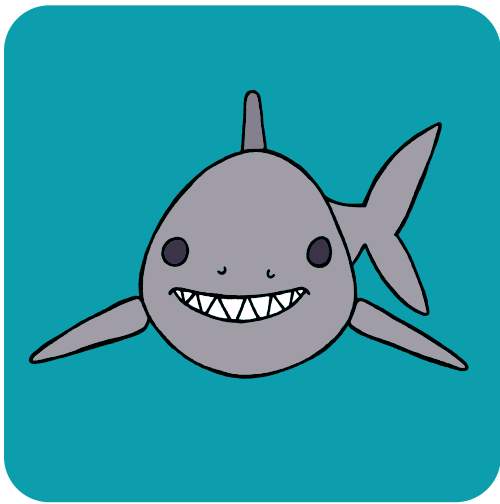
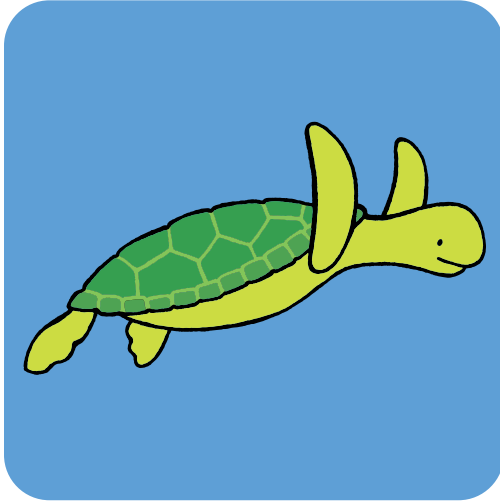
Ask children to come up with ideas for a **That's not my... book** for a sea creature of their choice.

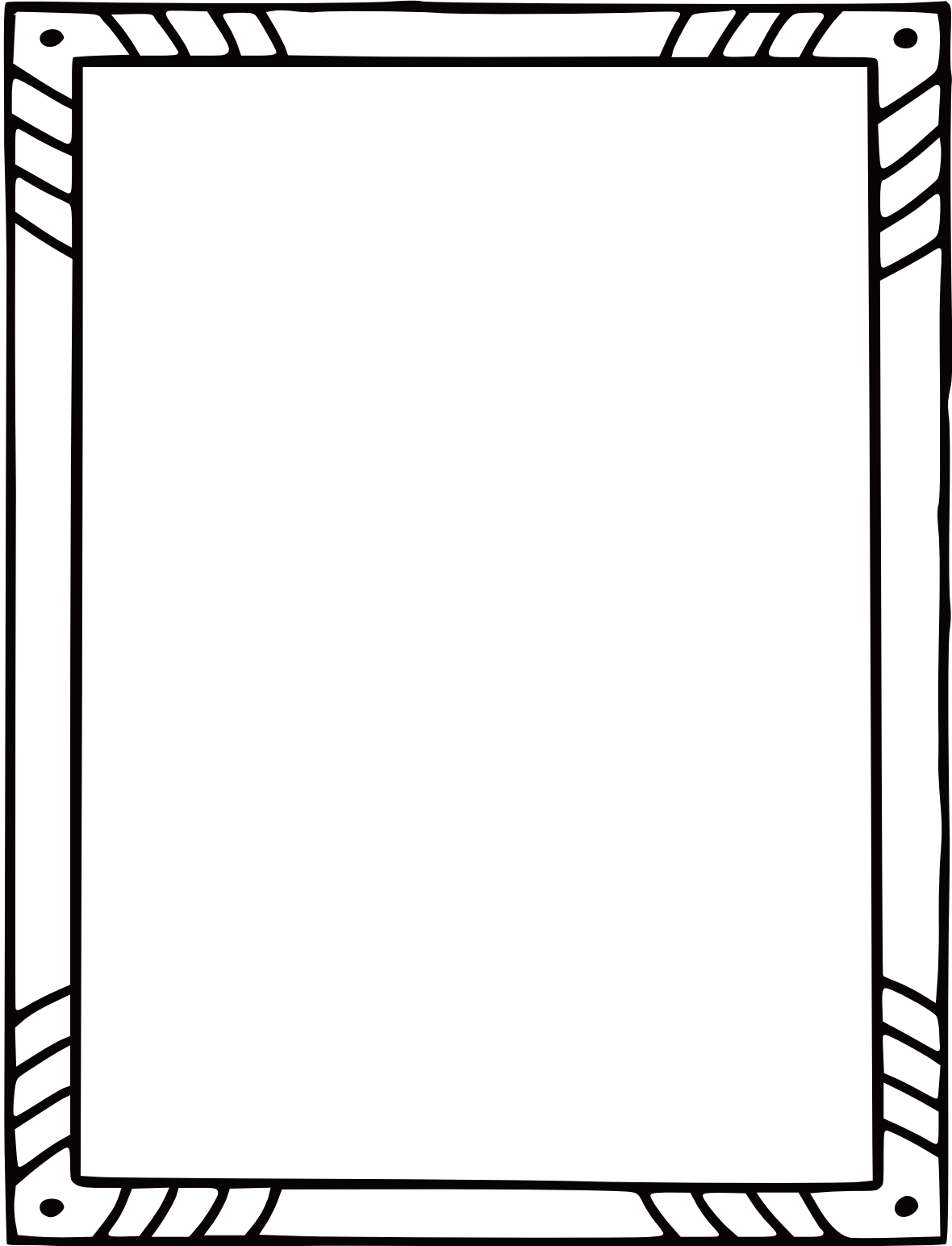
You can follow the steps listed below as a group:

1. **Choose a sea creature** and identify and label their different features. Does the chosen creature have a fin, a tail, tentacles, or a shell?
2. Come up with **describing words** for each feature. Match features to different objects and textures.
3. **Fill in the gaps of the book as a group:** e.g. '**That's not my fish...** its scales are too shiny'; '**That's not my turtle...** its shell is too smooth.'

Which **That's not my...** book idea is **their favourite?**

Sea Creatures Hide and Seek.





That's not my _____ ...
its _____