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LESSON PLANNING ARTICLE**Phil's Fish Shop****Subjects**

- **Arts & Humanities**
Language Arts
- **Science**
Life Science

Grades

3-5, 6-8

Brief Description

Playing roles as new employees in a pet shop, students offer advice to customers, answer questions, and create a handbook of instructions for new fish owners.

Objectives

Students

- investigate procedures for establishing a new fish aquarium
- respond in writing to situations with imaginary "customers"
- summarize information discovered into a handbook of directions for new fish owners.

Keywords

following directions, instructions, writing, aquarium, fish

Materials Needed

- [Phil's Fish Shop](#) work sheet

Return to [Following Directions](#)

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- Internet access (optional)

Lesson Plan

Mention beforehand that an activity will focus on "following directions," and you are likely to hear groans from students. What could be more important, but potentially less interesting? In this lesson, students find relevance -- and, we hope, enjoyment -- in the skill of following directions by simulating its use in the workplace.

To start this activity, poll your students to find out how many have pets and what they are. Briefly discuss some of the tasks the students perform for their pets and how they learned about pet care.

New pet owners look to shopkeepers for guidance in selecting appropriate pets, gathering the needed supplies, and learning to care for pets. They are eager to follow the advice of experienced staff, but not every employee is ready to offer such advice. New staff members must depend on research to assist them as they guide customers. Ask the students to imagine that they are new employees of a pet store that sells fish. What do they need to know in order to do their jobs well? Explain that you have a copy of the first page of the employee handbook, and read the following statements. A Web site is cited in the text, but if Internet access is not available, any resource that includes information about how to set up an aquarium may be appropriate.

Phil's Fish Shop Employee Handbook

Welcome to Phil's Fish Shop, "Where Fish Would Go if They Could Shop!"

We invite you to ask questions and get to know our products, our customers, and our staff. Customers turn to us as guides to help them create safe and pleasant environments for their fish. Whether they are beginners or experienced fish owners, we serve as an invaluable resource for our customers. Our support for pet owners keeps them coming back to Phil's to purchase supplies and additional aquarium pets!

Your first task as a new employee is to become familiar with how to set up an aquarium. Many of our customers are novice fish owners who have never had any aquarium pets. They rely on our staff to help identify the equipment they will need and explain how to set it up. Then we help the customers choose the right fish to fill their tanks.

Visit [How to Set Up a Home Aquarium](#), from the National Aquarium in Baltimore. Then pretend that you are working at the shop, and tell us how you would handle the situations described on the [Phil's Fish Shop Employee Exam](#) work sheet. Use the information you have gathered to design a set of instructions for new aquarium enthusiasts.

Give the students time to visit the Web site or peruse research materials of your choice and pass out the [Phil's Fish Shop Employee Exam](#) work sheet. If you prefer, students may share their instruction sheets with partners and

make suggestions and improvements. Collect the work sheets for evaluation.

Ads by C

Assessment

All answers should be presented in complete sentences.

Work Sheet Answer Key:

1. Mr. Jones should place a tank cover on his aquarium to reduce the rate of evaporation and keep fish from jumping out of the tank.
2. New tanks need to be conditioned before fish are added. Only crabs and damselfish should be placed in a tank for the first six weeks. Other fish, and especially large fish, can be included later.
3. The rule of thumb is 1 inch of fish per 1 gallon of water. Mrs. McCleary already has three fish, and ten guppies, regardless of size, are likely to be more than her 5-gallon tank can efficiently and effectively handle.
4. Algae can be beneficial in an aquarium, especially when allowed to grow on only one side of the tank where fish can graze on it.

EXTRA! Answers will vary but should be consistent with the material read.

Lesson Plan Source

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Submitted By

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National Standards

LANGUAGE ARTS: English

- **GRADES K - 12**
[NL-ENG.K-12.2](#) Reading for Understanding

SCIENCE

- **GRADES K - 4**
[NS.K-4.3](#) Life Science

GRADES 5 - 8
[NS.5-8.3](#) Life Science

GRADES 9 - 12
[NS.9-12.3](#) Life Science

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