

**LESSON PLAN 27: CREATING AN ANIMATED AQUARIUM**

**Objective:** Learn the basics of using and presenting with PowerPoint

**Age range:** 5-12

PowerPoint is an easy-to-use presentation tool that can come in handy in the classroom. Here’s a way to have some fun learning the basics of the program by using animated graphics to create your very own ‘living’ aquarium.

**YOU WILL NEED**

- ▶ Computer, PowerPoint, animated graphics

**DEVELOPING SKILLS**

Presentation, creativity, computer use, problem-solving, understanding nature

**METHOD**

1. Explain to your class that you’re going to create a virtual aquarium. Quiz them on aquariums, things like:

- What is an aquarium?
- Where can they be found?
- Why are they used?

Ask them to compile a list of suitable contents for an aquarium and, perhaps, draw a mock-up of what they want theirs to look like.

2. Start PowerPoint and select ‘blank page’. A new slide will open and you are ready to begin creating your aquarium.
3. Choose a suitable background colour and any effects you want.
4. Find suitable graphics – if you don’t have any on file, there are a number of online sources of free animated graphics with a ‘fishy’ flavour. Some you could try include:

- [www.gifs.net/gif/](http://www.gifs.net/gif/)
- [www.freegraphics.com/04\\_Animated\\_Graphics/](http://www.freegraphics.com/04_Animated_Graphics/)
- [www.animationlibrary.com/](http://www.animationlibrary.com/)
- [www.mcjeff.com/free.htm](http://www.mcjeff.com/free.htm)
- [www.cartooncottage.com](http://www.cartooncottage.com)
- [www.millan.net](http://www.millan.net)
- [www.prodraw.net](http://www.prodraw.net)

Try to find a variety of fish and underwater creatures (crabs, snails, seahorses, etc.), as well as plants, bubbles, and shipwrecks, to help make your aquarium more realistic. (And even divers, if you want to have a bit of fun!)

5. Insert the graphics into your slide. Move them around to create the design you want. Once done, go to ‘slideshow’ and see how your characters move. You may find that some don’t work properly, or how you would like. You’ll just have to experiment to find the best ones.



**TIP:** Unless you’re using the process as a way to learn about finding resources on the Web, find graphics yourself before the lesson, and download them to a folder that’s accessible to your class (which will speed up the whole process and prevent unwanted images being found).

6. Custom animation – if you’re not happy with the way your animations are moving, you can control them by using the ‘customise animation’ function.
7. Once you’ve got it looking just right, you can add sound – perhaps crashing waves, bubbles or even music (think ‘Nemo’ or ‘Jaws’!). To do this, select ‘Insert’ and choose ‘Movie and sounds’, and then ‘Sound from file’. Set it to play automatically (incidentally, you can hide the speaker behind your background).
8. Sit back, relax and enjoy your very own virtual aquarium.

**FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES**

1. Create different aquarium scenes, rearranging or using different graphics.
2. Create warm and cold, fresh and salt water aquariums.
3. Use the technique to create other habitats – woodland, coastal, mountains, etc.
4. Experiment with various PowerPoint functions to create different effects.
5. Use different presentation packages.