The Chesapeake’s Best Crab Cakes

A Study in Geography, Social Studies, and Economics

A program developed by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
in coordination with Talbot County Public Schools

Teacher’s Guide
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Overview

The Chesapeake’s Best Crab Cakes: A Study in Geography, Social Studies, and Economics, focuses on the relationship between the natural environment and the way people live and work in Talbot County, Maryland. Featuring the Chesapeake Bay blue crab and its journey from the Bay to the table, the program teaches about the watermen who catch the crabs, the seafood pickers and packing house operators who process the crabs, and the cooks who prepare crab dishes in local restaurants. The goal is for students to develop new skills, insights, and a more complete understanding of the economic issues facing the people who work and live in the Chesapeake region.

This program was developed jointly by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and Talbot County Public Schools as part of the third grade social studies unit on Talbot County. The activities are aligned with Maryland State Standards in Social Studies, Geography and Economics.

The Chesapeake’s Best Crab Cakes unit begins with teachers leading activities in the classroom. Next, Museum Educators from the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum visit the class with artifacts and guided activities about people who work in the Bay’s crab industry. Teachers then bring students on a field trip to the Museum where students visit a waterman’s wharf, find out about crab picking, and visit The Crab Claw Restaurant. After the Museum visit, teachers lead students in follow-up activities in the classroom. Additional resources for teachers have been developed and are listed at the end of this guidebook.
Getting Started: Classroom Activities
Vocabulary

- apron
- blue crab
- buster
- crab pot
- crabber
- cull
- culling stick
- eelgrass
- hard crab
- jimmy
- manager
- menu
- migrant worker
- molting
- paper shell
- picker
- seafood packinghouse
- skill
- soft crab
- sook
- trotline
Crab Vocabulary

Match the term on the left with its definition on the right.

1. apron
2. picker
3. migrant worker
4. sook
5. jimmy
6. eelgrass
7. trotlining
8. chicken neck
9. crabber
10. manager
11. buster
12. industry
13. crab pot
14. bushel basket
15. paper shell
16. cull
17. seafood packinghouse

A. What many crabbers use for bait
B. Someone who oversees or directs a business
C. A female crab
D. A large-scale business activity
E. A man or woman who harvests crabs to sell
F. The underside of a crab
G. A crab whose shell is beginning to split
H. A person who picks the meat out of a crab
I. A method of catching crabs using a long, baited line
J. A place where seafood is processed and packed into containers
K. A male crab
L. A soft crab whose shell has just begun to harden
M. A type of plant in which crabs like to hide
N. A laborer who moves from place to place for work
O. A container of a specific size in which watermen keep their crabs
P. To sort crabs by size
Q. A large, wire cage used to trap crabs
Crab Vocabulary

Match the term on the left with its definition on the right.

1. **apron** (8) A. What many crabbers use for bait
2. **picker** (10) B. Someone who oversees or directs a business
3. **migrant worker** (4) C. A female crab
4. **sook** (12) D. A large-scale business activity
5. **jimmy** (9) E. A man or woman who harvests crabs to sell
6. **eelgrass** (1) F. The underside of a crab
7. **trotlining** (11) G. A crab whose shell is beginning to split
8. **chicken neck** (2) H. A person who picks the meat out of a crab
9. **crabber** (7) I. A method of catching crabs using a long, baited line
10. **manager** (17) J. A place where seafood is processed and packed into containers
11. **buster** (5) K. A male crab
12. **industry** (15) L. A soft crab whose shell has just begun to harden
13. **crab pot** (6) M. A type of plant in which crabs like to hide
14. **bushel basket** (3) N. A laborer who moves from place to place for work
15. **paper shell** (14) O. A container of a specific size in which watermen keep their crabs
16. **cull** (16) P. To sort crabs by size
17. **seafood packinghouse** (13) Q. A large, wire cage used to trap crabs
Can you identify the parts of the blue crab?

Shell  Claws  Legs  Eyes  Back Fin  Apron

Fill in the blanks using the words listed below.

warmer  molting  saltier  soft  eggs  eelgrass  hibernate

In the winter, female crabs swim to the southern part of the Bay where the water is ________ and __________. Here they will lay their __________. When the weather gets cold, male crabs head for deep water where they __________ by burying in the mud. Crabs shed their shells as they grow. This process is known as __________. The crab’s new shell is __________. Soft shell crabs hide in __________ to avoid being eaten by fish or other crabs. Their new shell will start to harden in a few hours after shedding.
Blue Crabs

Can you identify the parts of the blue crab?

Shell
Claws
Legs
Eyes
Back Fin
Apron

claws
eyes
shell
legs
backfin
apron

Fill in the blanks using the words listed below.

warmer molting saltier soft eggs eelgrass hibernate

In the winter, female crabs swim to the southern part of the Bay where the water is __saltier__ and __warmer__. Here they will lay their __eggs__. When the weather gets cold, male crabs head for deep water where they __hibernate__ by burying in the mud. Crabs shed their shells as they grow. This process is known as __molting__. The crab’s new shell is __soft___. Soft shell crabs hide in __eelgrass__ to avoid being eaten by fish or other crabs. Their new shell will start to harden in a few hours after shedding.
Timeline of the Chesapeake Crab Industry

Cut out these dates and tape them on the time line in correct order.

1940  Old Bay Seasoning is invented by Baltimore spice dealer, Gustav Brunn.

2009  Crab dredging is outlawed in Virginia to protect the population of female sponge crabs, and to improve the low Chesapeake crab population.

1916  The first crab conservation laws were passed in Maryland. Laws limited the size of crabs, and regulated the length of the crabbing season.

1890  The JM Clayton Company, the first industrial crab house in the Chesapeake, begins processing crabs in Cambridge, Maryland.

1973  Due to a shortage of skilled crab pickers, the “Quik Pik” machine is invented in Cambridge to mechanically separate crabmeat from shell.

1950  The Chesapeake crabbing industry explodes after watermen return to work from World War II, and harvest and process more crabs than ever before.

1928  The wire crab pot was invented by Benjamin Lewis of Virginia. Watermen had a new method of crabbing.

1910  A system for sorting crabmeat into backfin, special, regular, claw, and lump was invented by Frederick Jewett of Coulbourne and Jewett Seafood Packing Company in St.Michaels.

1972  Hurricane Agnes destroys much of the Bay’s underwater grasses that provide a habitat for blue crabs.

2000  My class goes on a field trip to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.
Timeline of the Chesapeake Crab Industry

1890

1910

1916

1928

1940

1950

1972

1973

2009

20
A Classroom Visit by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Educators

(Overall time: 40 minutes)

Educators from the Maritime Museum will lead these activities and provide all the materials. The teacher will remain in charge of the classroom and may assist the Museum Educators, especially during transitions between activities. Students should wear nametags with first names displayed.

The classroom teacher will introduce the Museum Educators and tell the class that these visitors will lead them in learning activities about the people who work in the Chesapeake Bay seafood industries.

Activity 1: (15 minutes)
Picture posters will be displayed along with models of blue and red crabs. The Museum Educators will conduct a webbing activity, using the enclosed “Crabbing Web” to assess students’ prior knowledge. Selected students will read the job descriptions of people working in the crabbing industry that are associated with the picture posters.

Activity 2: (10 minutes)
Maps will be distributed. Students will locate rivers and towns of Talbot County, their school, and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

Activity 3: (10 minutes)
A short video will be shown illustrating people working in the crabbing industry. The Museum Educators will call on students to share what they learned.

Activity 4: (5 minutes)
A hands-on, interactive webbing activity will reinforce the concept of jobs involved with getting the crab from the Bay to the plate.
Crabbing Web
Student Evaluation–Classroom Visit

Form 1

Rate the activities:  ☺ = I really liked this activity
                    ☻ = This activity was just okay.
                    ☻ = I did not like this activity.

Circle the face that shows the way you felt about each activity you did today.

Crabbing Industry Jobs  ☺ ☻ ☻
Map Reading           ☺ ☻ ☻
Video                ☺ ☻ ☻
Yarn Crab Web        ☺ ☻ ☻

1) Choose one activity and describe what you liked.

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

2) Write one thing you learned that you did not already know about crabbing.

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

3) What question do you still have about crabbing in Talbot County?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________
A visit to the
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, St. Michaels, Maryland
Museum Visit Guidelines

• Follow your school’s field trip guidelines in preparing for the trip.

• For the Museum field trip, students should be divided into groups of 10-12 students, each with a chaperone or teacher to accompany them.

• Students will rotate through several stations: The Maryland Crabmeat Company, Waterman's Wharf, Restaurant, and Crab Picker.

• Students should wear nametags with first names displayed, and dress for the weather- the program will continue rain or shine.

• The Museum docents will meet teachers, chaperones, and students at the Museum’s Admission Building. Teachers should be prepared to have students break into smaller groups and be paired up with a docent at the Admission Building, before entrance to the Museum.

• If necessary, students will be allowed to take a bathroom break before the program begins.
Student Evaluation-Museum Field Trip

Form 2

Rate the stations:  

😊 = I really liked this station.  

😊 = This station was just okay.  

😊 = I did not like this station.

Circle the face that shows the way you felt about each station you did today.

Waterman’s Wharf Station

😊  😊  😊

Packinghouse Station

😊  😊  😊

The Crab Claw Restaurant Station

😊  😊  😊

1) Choose one station and describe what you liked.

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2) Write one thing you learned by visiting the Museum.

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3) What question do you still have about crabbing?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Back in the Classroom
Putting It All Together

At the end of the Museum visit, teachers can use the six picture cards on the following page to have students sequence the steps the crab takes from the Bay to the dinner plate. Teachers should use the writing prompt to encourage students to describe the four crab harvesting techniques.

(OPTIONS) The six pictures can be glued to 3x5 index cards for future reference.
Writing Prompt

Examine the four pictures. Each shows a different method of harvesting crabs. Answer the following questions based on your opinions about crabbing.

I) In a paragraph, explain your favorite method for harvesting crabs.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2) In a paragraph, compare two methods of crabbing and provide details to support your answer. Be sure to include the names of both methods and the equipment used.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
A School Visit by a Museum Educator

The educator from the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum will make a pre-museum visit to each elementary school. This part of the program works best as a classroom visit rather than an assembly, so several classroom visits may need to be scheduled on one day so all the students get to participate. Please be prepared to arrange these visits and suggest dates and times for the program when arranging your museum visit.

By learning the context about The Chesapeake’s Best Crab Cakes, students will learn that the crab industry is part of a living tradition on the Chesapeake Bay. Each day, watermen, crab pickers, and seafood processors use skills that have been passed down from generation to generation. Students will begin to understand not only the role the crab industry plays in the history and culture of the Chesapeake, but also how limited natural, capital, and human resources require people to make choices.
Teacher Evaluation Form

1. Did the program complement your instructional unit?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

2. Does the program need to be modified?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

   If yes, how should it be modified?

3. Please evaluate the effectiveness of the Museum Educators’ visit to your classroom.

   Presentation was age appropriate.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

   Length of program
   - ☐ just right
   - ☐ too long
   - ☐ too short

   Presentation style
   - ☐ engaging
   - ☐ okay
   - ☐ poor

   Provided adequate groundwork for museum field trip.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

   Activities effectively engaged students.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

   Additional Comments:

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
4. Please evaluate the visit to the museum.

A. Waterman's Wharf Station
   Presentation was age appropriate. ○ Yes ○ No
   Length of program ○ just right ○ too long ○ too short
   Presentation style ○ engaging ○ okay ○ poor
   Activities effectively engaged students. ○ Yes ○ No

B. Packinghouse Station
   Presentation was age appropriate. ○ Yes ○ No
   Length of program ○ just right ○ too long ○ too short
   Presentation style ○ engaging ○ okay ○ poor
   Activities effectively engaged students. ○ Yes ○ No

C. The Crab Claw Restaurant Station
   Presentation was age appropriate. ○ Yes ○ No
   Length of program ○ just right ○ too long ○ too short
   Presentation style ○ engaging ○ okay ○ poor
   Activities effectively engaged students. ○ Yes ○ No

5. Please rate the effectiveness of the Teacher’s Guide.
   Overall guide ○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor
   Clarity of guide ○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor
   Value as instructional tool ○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor
   Quality of resources ○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor

6. Overall comments on complete program, including Museum Educators’ visit, Museum field trip, materials, etc.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Please return the completed student and teacher evaluations to:
Director of Education, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, P.O. Box 636, St. Michaels MD 21663.
In a paragraph to the Crab Claw Restaurant, explain why these items would be helpful in the restaurant.
Mama sent me
To get the crabs
From old Benny,
Down on the creek
Where the shanty men seek
Happiness.
He was mending eel pots,
Tar and twine,
And deft seine needle,
Chewing tobacco,
Spitting fine,
Whistling softly.
He couldn’t even see,
Little boys like me.

I heard them scratching
In a covered basket.
Shyly I whispered,
Scared almost dead,
“Are those the crabs, Captain Ben?”
Rolling an eye, he grunted,
“Them’s them,”
That’s all he said,
“Them’s them.”

Gilbert Byron lived, worked, and wrote in St. Michaels, Maryland from the summer of 1946 until his death in June, 1991. Byron wrote “Crab Talk” was written while he was living and teaching in Dover, Delaware.
Chesapeake Voices

It’s how you pick the crab: An Oral Portrait of Eastern Shore Crab Picking

By Kelly Feltault and the Crab Pickers of the Eastern Shore

Selected oral portraits Eastern Shore crab pickers and industry workers.

My father worked at Charles Parks when I was a child back in the ‘20s and ‘30s—they’re still in crab picking even today. And my mother picked crabs there, Mrs. Parks taught her. This factory was where the steamboats came. The floor was wooden in the factory; there was no cement floor like today. At one time, my mother and father lived right there. They had an apartment above the crab house, which was way out in the water on the long wooden wharf. I would think because of the steamboat, it had to be out in the channel. And I learned to count to a hundred there, to count peeler crabs from the crabbers bringing them in.

–Evelyn Robinson, crab picker from Dorchester County. She has picked crabs for over 45 years.
When I was a kid, I would work every summer doing all those little things that no one else wanted to do. All the cans for the day had to be dipped in a sanitizer. So I’d be given a stack of a thousand cans and had to dip every one of them. Turn them upside down; count them out in lots of a hundred, made sure everyone had ice in their bin, made sure everyone had paper towels, and carrying the meat up and bringing it back to the pickers- things like that. And I did that every summer, for years. It was always my summer job.

–Tim Howard, owner and manager, Maryland Crab Meat Company. He grew up working in the packinghouse, and ran the company until it closed in 1999.

Where my sisters and I live in Mexico is a big city- an industrial city. We have a university, big clinics and buildings, but there are not too many opportunities for work. Here we have an opportunity to earn more money. If I work very hard here, what I would make in Mexico working for one whole month, I can earn here in one week- and I spend less here. Yes, everything is worthwhile- the effort, the sacrifice, the pain involved in the work we do. That is why we keep coming back, because there is an advantage for us in this work and that is why we leave our families behind to work here from April through November.

–Guadalupe Garcia Ortiz, crab picker from Mexico. She comes to the Chesapeake each summer and fall to pick crabs.

Coordination’s everything in picking a crab. If you don’t have coordination, then you can forget it, because really you’re not doing very much. And that’s why anybody pick crab long enough, if they’re any good at it at all, they say they’re a professional. I always say that, but it’s an art to doing all this. That’s why these ladies can talk and not have to look at what they’re doing, because they know their hands are working together.

–Donald Cephas, the fastest claw cracker on the Eastern Shore.

It’s three verses to My Hope is Built. And mostly, we would grab that chorus and hold unto it for the longest time, we would sing it over, and over, and over. Yes. After you hear the songs, and you get the feel, something within you let you know that it’s time for you to either talk or to sing, to express how you feel within yourself. That would build the momentum and then everyone would want to express their self in some way. And what better way to express yourself in a building like that than singing.

—Alice Palmer, claw cracker and crab picker from Talbot County. She cracks claws from Higgins Crab House in St. Michaels.
Questions:

1) In paragraph one, how did Ms. Evelyn learn to count to 100?

2) In paragraph two, Mr. Tim Howard shares his summer job. Who was Mr. Howard and where did he work?

3) In paragraph three, why does the crab picker come to pick crabs?

4) In the last paragraph, explain why Ms. Alice Palmer felt singing was important.
Crab Math

Complete the following math problems and show why you know your answer is correct.

1) The Robert Morris Inn uses 150 pounds of crabmeat each week. If they are open 5 days a week, how much crabmeat do they use each day? Remember to label your answer.

2) Elise has 12 crabs. Each one is 5 inches long from point to point. If she lines them up, how long will her line of crabs be? Write your answer in inches and feet.

3) A waterman, Mr. Jones, gets $2.00 for one peeler crab. If he catches 6 on Monday, and 9 on Tuesday, how much money does he get if he sells his peelers?

4) Tyrone's trotline is 36 feet long. He ties on a chicken neck as bait every 3 feet. How many chicken necks does he use to bait his trotline?

5) Maria wants a crab feast on Friday. She started catching crabs on Monday and kept them in a floating cage until the feast. On Monday she caught 3 crabs. On Tuesday she caught 4. On Wednesday she only had 1 in each pot. On Thursday she found 6. On Friday she caught 5 crabs. How many crabs does Maria have for her feast?

6. A waterman, Mr. Hamilton, is paid $40 for a bushel of crabs. If he catches 4 bushels of crabs, how much money does he make for selling his crabs?
Crab Math

Complete the following math problems and show why you know your answer is correct.

1) The Robert Morris Inn uses 150 pounds of crabmeat each week. If they are open 5 days a week, how much crabmeat do they use each day? Remember to label your answer.

\[ 150 \div 5 = 30 \text{ lbs.} \]

2) Elise has 12 crabs. Each one is 5 inches long from point to point. If she lines them up, how long will her line of crabs be? Write your answer in inches and feet.

\[ 12 \times 5 \text{ inches} = 60 \text{ inches} \]
\[ 60 \div 12 = 5 \text{ feet} \]

3) A waterman, Mr. Jones, gets $2.00 for one peeler crab. If he catches 6 on Monday, and 9 on Tuesday, how much money does he get if he sells his peelers?

\[ $2.00 \times 15 = $30.00 \]

4) Tyrone's trotline is 36 feet long. He ties on a chicken neck as bait every 3 feet. How many chicken necks does he use to bait his trotline?

\[ 36 \div 3 = 12 \text{ chicken necks} \]

5) Maria wants a crab feast on Friday. She started catching crabs on Monday and kept them in a floating cage until the feast. On Monday she caught 3 crabs. On Tuesday she caught 4. On Wednesday she only had 1 in each pot. On Thursday she found 6. On Friday she caught 5 crabs. How many crabs does Maria have for her feast?

\[ 3 + 4 + 1 + 6 + 5 = 19 \]

6. A waterman, Mr. Hamilton, is paid $40 for a bushel of crabs. If he catches 4 bushels of crabs, how much money does he make for selling his crabs?

\[ $40.00 \times 4 = $160.00 \]
Watermen Use Technology To Count Crabs

August 26, 2012
By DARRYL FEARS
The Washington Post

On the Potomac River, Rocky Rice's crab-pot markers stretched for miles. There was a crab in every pot. “Probably six to eight,” Rice said. Over two decades, watermen such as Rice have relied on a method of counting what they catch, using on paper and pencil to log the size, sex and texture of trapped crabs, sometimes scratching out figures from memory before mailing them to the state.

It has resulted in an inaccurate count at a time when Maryland is working to fully restore the Chesapeake Bay’s important species. But on his recent outing, Rice broke with tradition, putting away paper and pen. Instead he carried a digital ThinkPad with software that allowed him to count his catch in the middle of the river, then send it directly to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) using a wireless signal as his boat made its five-mile run to shore in Morgantown.

Rice is one of 50 Maryland watermen participating in a pilot program that could one day provide the most precise count of the Chesapeake Bay commercial blue-crab harvest the state has ever had. Maryland’s watermen would be among the nation’s first to count their catch using smart technology—tablets and cellphones. As part of the pilot program, they can log their catch in three ways: software that sends it directly into a DNR database, text messages sent to a designated number and telephone calls to a call center.

“Maintaining the bay's crab stock is complicated, and knowing where adult crabs are harvested, especially females, is crucial to protecting them,” said Steve Early, fisheries service division manager for DNR. Females in the southernmost part of Maryland’s portion of the watershed are jealously guarded because they are crucial to maintaining
Watermen Use Technology To Count Crabs

the crab stock in Maryland and Virginia. This year, the annual dredge survey in Virginia and Maryland showed that the juvenile crab population has rebounded significantly, from 207 million in 2011 to 587 million this year, after Virginia outlawed the winter harvest of most pregnant females. State officials and watermen want the number to keep going up. With electronics, the state could better manage the fishery, possibly grow the crab stock, and breathe new life into its dying fishing industry by raising catch limits, goals that have eluded it for decades.

Watermen who embrace the technology say they know what is at stake. In 2007, when the bay’s blue-crab population hit a low of 250 million, Rocky Rice feared for his livelihood. “Crabbing is 85 percent of my income. Me, at 35 years old, I hope to be doing this another 30 years,” he said.

Officials are confident about selling watermen on the technology, because they helped choose it. Under the old system, “there was way too much false reporting,” said Billy Rice, Rocky’s dad. Out on the Potomac, his son Rocky was catching up. He logged on to a program on a ThinkPad issued to him after his training.

He logged five bushels of big No. 1 crabs, two bushels of smaller No. 2 crabs, a half bushel of females, a half bushel with mixed genders and finally 15 peelers, crabs that were shedding and growing. Rice hit send and was done. He powered his engine and sped by the Gov. Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge toward his house on the water’s edge in his new paperless world.
Watermen Use Technology To Count Crabs

Reinforcement Questions

Directions
1) Students read silently and answer the following questions.
2) Teachers will read the current events article orally while students read silently from their copy. Students will then write answers to the following questions.

Interpretive Question
Why is the state considering new crabbing rules?

Personal Response Question
If crabbers are not allowed to catch female crabs, what effects do you think that will have on the crabbing harvest? Support your answer with data from the article.

1) In paragraph two, how did the DNR allow for a better system to count crabs?

2) In a paragraph four, what did the annual dredge survey in Virginia and Maryland show?

3) In the last paragraph, how many crabs were logged into the ThinkPad?
Crabs are important in many cultures besides our own. In this story, read how some Africans feel about the crab and the lessons it can teach us. When you have finished, answer the questions to test what you have learned.

**Why The Sideways Scuttling Crab Has No Head**

*An African Folk Tale*

Once upon a time, long ago, the mother of the earth, Nzambi Mpungu, was resting after creating the plants, flowers, lakes, mountains, streams, and oceans. She sighed with happiness as she looked around at the jungles, forests, and savannas. The waters were blue and green, and the skies were clear blue with the occasional fluffy cloud. There were jungles, deep and dark, forests of green and gold, savannas with waving grasses, and white sand beaches with foaming surf.

After her rest, Nzambi Mpungu was ready to take on a great task. First she created the happy monkey. She made limber and strong legs and arms so that they could swing from the branches of the trees and from the hanging vines. Soon the sounds of playful monkeys chattering to each other was heard throughout the forests. Then she made the elegant gazelles, and all types of antelopes, with their shiny coats and a variety of wonderful horns. The savannas were filled with herds of these antelopes racing about!
The next day, Nzambi Mpungu set about on weighty matters. She created the large elephant, hippopotamus, and rhino. The gentle hippo thanked Nzambi for its impressive shape, its very clever ears which rotated in different directions at the same time, and for the wonderful water holes on the savanna where the hippo loved to live and play. The big strong rhinoceros appreciated his thick skin, almost like armor! He strolled across the savannas, and all the animals thought Nzambi very creative to have given him a horn like no other animal. The rhino’s horn was hard all the way through.

He didn’t mind in the least that he was a little near-sighted! Nzambi went on to the grand elephant. As the night deepened, Nzambi grew tired, and she told the elephant that she would finish him in the morning. The patient and respectful elephant told Nzambi Mpungu to have a good sleep. In the morning, refreshed, Nzambi was true to her word, and finished up the elephant... with an amazing trunk that reached all the way to the ground, and a pair of handsome ivory tusks! He was indeed a grand animal!

Nzambi continued her work until the world was filled with animals. There were proud lions, sleek tigers, parrots and other birds that flashed their colors in the skies, playful zebras with their wild stripes, and gentle giraffes with their breathtakingly long necks. She filled the oceans, lakes, and streams, with silvery fish. She created the beautiful flamingo and the colorful snakes. Indeed the world was filled with life, and the animals appreciated Nzambi Mpungu. They praised her talent, patience and creativity. But, she was not yet done. She started on a crab. She gave the small crab a hard circular shell, and many legs. She skillfully fashioned not two, not four, but eight jointed legs! Now the stars were twinkling in the night sky, and she was tired.

“Well, little crab, I am tired, and I will finish you tomorrow, by giving you a handsome head,” sighed Nzambi. Nzambi noticed that the little crab was strutting about flexing each of his eight legs in a little dance. He was skittering sideways by the side of a pond, clicking his pincers, and admiring himself in the reflection of the water. “Did you hear me, my little crab?” she questioned.

“Oh yes, Nzambi, I will have to wait until tomorrow to get my surely magnificent head,” replied the crab, admiring himself all the while. Nzambi was slightly confused by the tone of this reply, but she was so very tired, and she went to sleep quickly.

The little crab was far from tired! Off he scuttled, waving his eight legs prominently, and noisily clicking his pincers wherever he went. He spoke to many of the animals that night.
He told the giraffe and antelope to make certain to come to Nzambi Mpungu’s early the next morning to see him get what was sure to be the most magnificent head in all the land. He called up to the birds to be sure to come and see his new head in the morning. He remarked that it had taken Nzambi only part of a day to make the mighty lion, but as anyone could see, she was going to work on him for two days! Now, this was not entirely accurate, but that is indeed what the little crab said.

Then he went on, becoming more bold with each encounter. He told the lion that he had eight legs to the elephant’s four, he told the zebra that his bright colors were brighter than those of most animals, he told the monkeys that he had infinite mobility with his eight legs that could skitter to the front, back or sideways! All these traits, the little crab boasted, surely made him a wonderful creature, and surely, he promised, Nzambi had been saving the best for last! The head she had promised would be the most intricately shaped, the most beautiful, and the most clever!

I am sorry to tell you, but the little crab boasted all night long, whipping all the other animals into a frenzy of excitement over tomorrow’s creation of the crab’s head. The stories of what Nzambi had promised grew bigger and more elaborate as the night turned from its darkest to a shimmering of dawn. In the morning all of the animals were assembled outside of Nzambi’s, waiting with great anticipation! Nzambi awoke; after all, it was noisy that morning! She came out and was thoroughly surprised to see all the animals gathered about the crab.

“What is happening here?” she queried.

The kindly elephant slowly advanced and explained that all the animals had assembled to watch the crab receive his magnificent head. He explained that they were all excited to see a creation such as the one that crab had described. He continued to elaborate on the glorious expectations of the crab head. He finished up by acknowledging that all the animals agreed that such a head could only be made by one as brilliant and wise as she, Nzambi Mpungu.

And Nzambi was wise. She saw immediately the folly of conceit, and the dangers of telling a not quite true story! She turned to the preening crab, and quickly gave him two eyes that poked out from the top of his hard shell body. Than she said, “Little crab, I think you are fine the way you are.” Nzambi gave a great yawn, turned, and went back to sleep.

The crab turned and faced all the other animals, then skittered off. Now his sideways gait was from embarrassment!

Adapted from Folktales, Legends, and Myths, Patail Enterprises, 1995
Why The Sideways Scuttling Crab Has No Head

An African Folk Tale

Using the article you have just read, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

Comprehension Questions:

1) In paragraph one, who is Nzambi Mpungu?

2) According to the story, what is the first animal to be created?

3) What is the last animal that is created?

4) What did the crab do after Nzambi Mpungu went to sleep?

5) Who explained to Nzambi why all the animals were gathered, and what did he say?

6) Why did Nzambi Mpungu only give the crab two eyes instead of a head?

7) What is the story’s lesson or moral?

8) Write your own crab story on a separate piece of paper.
Why The Sideways Scuttling Crab Has No Head

An African Folk Tale

Using the article you have just read, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

Comprehension Questions:

1) In paragraph one, who is Nzambi Mpungu?
   Mother of the Earth

2) According to the story, what is the first animal to be created?
   Monkey

3) What is the last animal that is created?
   Crab

4) What did the crab do after Nzambi Mpungu went to sleep?
   Boasted

5) Who explained to Nzambi why all the animals were gathered, and what did he say?
   The elephant explained that the animals had gathered to watch the creation of the crab’s head.

6) Why did Nzambi Mpungu only give the crab two eyes instead of a head?
   The crab was boastful and did not tell the true story.

7) What is the story’s lesson or moral?
   Class discussion.

8) Write your own crab story on a separate piece of paper.
   Answers will vary.
Chesapeake Crab Maps

![Map of the Chesapeake Bay region with cities and states labeled.]

**Figure 1: Total Crab Population**

![Graph showing the total crab population from 1990 to 2008.]

**Chesapeake Bay Hard Crab Harvest**

![Graph showing the baywide total landings and state-specific landings for Maryland and Virginia from 1990 to 2008.]

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Updated March, 2013
Chesapeake Crab Maps

Using the map of the Northeast region, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1) Name the five states labeled on the map

2) Name the states that surround Maryland on all sides.

3) Which Maryland region makes up the Eastern Shore?

4) The Chesapeake Bay watershed takes in what states?

Using the graph for the Chesapeake Bay Hard Crab Harvest, answer the following questions.

5) How many million pounds of crabs were harvested in 1993?

6) In 2005, how many millions of pounds were harvested in Maryland?

7) Name the four areas covered on the line graph.
Web, Video & Print Resources

VIDEO RESOURCES

Blue Crab molting and mating—SERC
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFG87XDLZ6U

Bay 101 Blue Crabs—Chesapeake Bay Program
http://vimeo.com/25418647

J.M. Clayton Crab Company—Cambridge, MD
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWpr34F_JHg

WEBSITES

Smithsonian Environmental Research Center—Chesapeake Blue Crabs
http://www.serc.si.edu/education/resources/bluecrab/index.aspx

National Geographic—Chesapeake “Then and Now”
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/chesapeake/

Chesapeake Bay Program—Blue crab field guide
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fieldguide/critter/blue_crab

Chesapeake Bay Foundation
http://www.cbf.org

Maryland Sea Grant—Blue Crabs
http://www.mds.g.umd.edu/issues/chesapeake/blue_crabs/

Virginia Institute of Marine Science Sea Grant
http://www.vims.edu/adv/ed

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Education Blog
http://www.beautifulswimmers.tumblr.com

ARTICLES

Weather Gauge, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, 2005.

“Black Pioneers of Seafood Packing” by Richard J. Dodd.

Chesapeake Bay Journal—“It’s called a Jubilee, but the crabs aren’t happy.”

Washington Post—“Failing the Bay” series

Chesapeake Bay on the Brink—“Bay Crabs Make Comeback, But Industry Struggles.”
Web, Video & Print Resources

RECIPES


CHILDREN’S BOOK

Chadwick the Crab, Priscilla Cummings. Tidewater Publishers, 1986

Dancing on the Sand: The Story of an Atlantic Blue Crab, Kathleen Hollenbeck. Smithsonian Institution, 1999


Let’s Go Crabbing, Rick Parks. Bay Books

Crabby’s Water Wish: Tale of Saving Sea Life, Suzanne Tate. Nags Head Art Institute, 1992

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Harvesting the Chesapeake: Tools and Traditions, Centreville, MD: Larry S.Chowing, Tide Water Publishers, 1990


OTHER RESOURCES

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum will provide each Talbot County school with a “Crab Kit: A Bushel of Resources” containing materials related to the crab industry, to be utilized by teachers prior to the classroom visit by CBMM educators.
Acknowledgements

In 1998 The Breene M. Kerr Center for Chesapeake Studies at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum conducted oral histories and documentation with Eastern Shore crab pickers and packinghouse owners. Folklorist Kelly Feltault recorded over fifty oral histories and documented the experiences and stories of the men and women responsible for the Eastern Shore’s crab industry.

The mission of the Kerr Center for Chesapeake Studies is to conduct and promote regional humanities research, education, and outreach focused on the relationships of nature and culture of the Chesapeake. The Chesapeake’s Best Crab Cakes: A Study in Geography, Social Studies, and Economics is the Kerr Center’s first educational program created for elementary school students. Created in partnership with the Talbot County Public Schools, this program for third graders was developed by the staff of the Kerr Center for Chesapeake Studies, teachers Susan Divilio and Judy Gill, docents Lois Blaine and Dot Low, and Robert L. Tingle (Educational Consulting Services).

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