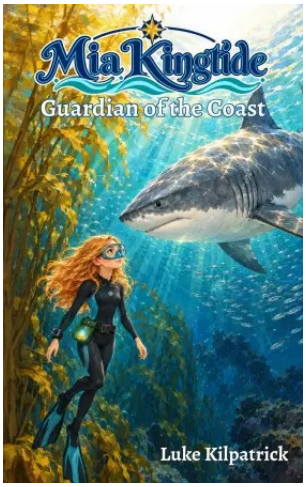
Guardian of the Coast

A teacher's and reader's guide



BOOK 2 | MIA KINGTIDE OCEAN ADVENTURES

Suggested teaching focus: ages 8-12, grades 3-6. Use supported reading or extend the research for older learners. These are guide recommendations, not a measured reading level.

Big question: How can a community protect the coast while caring about the people who depend on it?

Mia's expanding world connects marine mammal rescue, fishing livelihoods, shark research and the Western Flyer. Students explore how compassion becomes informed action, and why a conservation problem can have more than one perspective.

Inside: A flexible reading plan; chapter connections; vocabulary; 22 discussion questions; four classroom projects; six writing prompts; teacher response notes; two reproducible student sheets; assessment and sources.

Find it quickly: Teaching plan 2 | Chapter map 3 | Word bank 4 | Discussion 5-7 | Projects 8-11 | Writing 12 | Teacher notes 13 | Student sheets 14-15 | Curriculum and sources 16.

Prepared for classrooms, libraries, book clubs and families. Discussion pages contain spoilers. Read the relevant chapters first.

Based on the novel by Luke Kilpatrick. Guide structure adapted from the reader's guide included in Book 4, The Vanishing Sanctuary.

Teaching choices and consequences

A flexible six-meeting sequence

Learning goals

- Support an interpretation with two details from a scene.
- Explain how habitat, wildlife and human livelihoods can be connected.
- Compare stakeholders without assuming everyone in a group thinks alike.
- Distinguish a fictional solution from a claim that needs outside evidence.
- Propose a practical response, identify a tradeoff and explain how to check its results.

1. Chapters 1-2: Begin a coast map and a problems/helpers chart. Contrast a distressed animal with a damaged habitat. Ask what different expertise each situation needs.

2. Chapters 3-4: Discuss rehabilitation and animal perspectives. Start the marine-ally research project on page 9. Compare a character's voice with a scientific description.

3. Chapters 5-6: Trace Sandy's recovery and release; explore the coast above and below the surface. Build the response flowchart on page 8.

4. Chapter 7: Slow down for the fishing dispute. Track each person's goals, actions and consequences before judging the proposed solutions. Use the community meeting on page 10.

5. Chapters 8-10: Connect reading, exploration and research aboard Western Flyer. Prepare questions for a scientist or educator using page 11.

6. After reading: Share projects and revise an early opinion. Assess the quality of reasoning and the willingness to consider new evidence.

Plan 25-35 minutes of discussion per meeting, plus reading time. Projects require 40-60 minutes each; interviews may need a separate session. Split long chapters across meetings.

Access and extension: Offer audio or adult read-aloud support, a character chart and sentence frames. Let students record oral responses. Extend with two-source research and a counterargument, rather than simply assigning more writing.

Materials: Novel, coastal map, paper, pencils, teacher-selected wildlife resources and optional internet access. Every project can be completed indoors.

Follow the coastal connections

Chapter map

Use chapter numbers because page numbers vary by edition. Keep the elephant seal pup and Sandy the harbor seal distinct when tracking the rescue stories.

1. A Cry for Help

At Año Nuevo, a young elephant seal needs assistance. Track what Mia notices, who can help and what readers still do not know.

2. Trawlers and Troubled Waters

Kelp monitoring near Bolinas becomes a conflict over destructive fishing. Separate the observed habitat damage from conclusions about motives and responsibility.

3. Sandy's Second Chance

The Marine Mammal Center introduces rehabilitation work and Sandy's injuries. Consider the knowledge, equipment and patience behind a recovery.

4. Guardians of the Deep

Shark science and encounters with Koro, Tala and Kallara challenge assumptions about predators. Compare scientific evidence with Mia's magical access to animal voices.

5. A Fresh Start at Ross' Cove

Sandy's release makes recovery a beginning rather than the end of an animal's life story. Identify the roles of trained people and family supporters.

6. Mavericks Above and Below

The same coast looks different from land and underwater. Explain why a place can matter to wildlife, researchers, visitors and fishing families.

7. A Price Too Low, A Cost Too High

Gus, Jesse and Mike reveal economic pressure, conflict and consequences. Track how sabotage affects both people and marine life.

8-10. A Log Worth Exploring; Presentations and Surprises; Aboard the Western Flyer

A school assignment becomes a bridge to Steinbeck, Ricketts and ocean exploration. Compare reading about a place with investigating it, and explain what an ROV adds.

Reading routine: After each chapter, record one new fact about the plot, one interpretation and one real-world question. Do not treat all three as equally certain.

Words for coastal decision-makers

Build a shared vocabulary

Rehabilitation: Specialist care intended to help an injured or ill animal recover. Release decisions require professional judgment.

Habitat: The conditions and resources in the place where an organism lives.

Monitoring: Repeated observations or measurements used to look for changes.

Bycatch: Animals caught unintentionally while fishing for other species.

Derelict gear: Fishing equipment that has been lost or abandoned. Some can continue trapping or entangling animals.

Livelihood: The work and resources through which someone supports a household.

Stakeholder: A person or group affected by a decision or able to influence it.

Tradeoff: A choice in which gaining one benefit may mean accepting a cost or giving up another benefit.

Accountability: Taking responsibility for actions and their consequences.

Evidence: Information that supports or challenges a claim. Check where it came from and what it actually shows.

ROV: A remotely operated vehicle controlled from a distance, often through a cable. Researchers use underwater ROVs to observe and collect information.

Perspective: The position or experience from which someone understands events.

Keep the science clear

Purple sea urchins are native to the California coast. A large population can contribute to kelp loss under some conditions; that does not make the species invasive. Use this as a model for checking a word in a story against a scientific source. [R1]

Mia's animal conversations and underwater abilities are fantasy. Real rehabilitation and release depend on trained teams. Observers should give wild marine mammals space and contact an appropriate response organization about concerns. [R2]

Try it: Choose two words. Write a scene-based sentence for each, then a question that would require outside research. An imagined animal's opinion is evidence about characterization, not a scientific measurement.

Discuss: help, habitat and perspective

Questions 1-8

Use an action or detail from the relevant chapter to support each answer. There can be more than one reasonable interpretation.

1. Compassion and restraint | Chapter 1

What makes Mia want to help the elephant seal pup? In a real encounter, how could staying back and contacting trained responders be a form of helping?

2. Seeing a larger problem | Chapter 2

How does the focus shift from one animal to an entire habitat? Name two living things or human activities that could be affected by damage to a kelp forest.

3. From observation to conclusion | Chapter 2

Choose a detail Mia observes and a conclusion she draws. What additional information would a real investigator want before assigning responsibility?

4. The work behind recovery | Chapter 3

What does the rehabilitation setting reveal that a quick rescue scene might leave out? Explain why care takes more than goodwill.

5. Two animals, two stories | Chapters 1 and 3

Compare the elephant seal pup and Sandy the harbor seal. What is similar about their need for help? What details distinguish their situations?

6. Changing a reputation | Chapter 4

How do the encounters with sharks challenge a simple "dangerous animal" label? Explain the difference between respecting a predator and pretending it presents no risk.

7. Animal voices | Chapter 4

What can Mia learn through her magical conversations that other characters cannot? How would a scientist investigate a similar question without that power?

8. Many kinds of expertise | Chapters 1-4

Choose two helpers with different skills. How would the story change if only one kind of expertise were available?

Discussion move: Invite a partner to add a detail before agreeing or disagreeing. Try: "Your example makes me think..." or "The scene I read differently is..."

Discuss: recovery and competing needs

Questions 9-16

9. What counts as success? | Chapter 5

Why is Sandy's release meaningful? What can readers celebrate, and what cannot they know about Sandy's future from the release scene alone?

10. A place above and below | Chapter 6

How does the underwater view change your understanding of Mavericks? Describe two perspectives on the same place without deciding that one person owns its meaning.

11. A fair price | Chapter 7

Why do the crabbers care about the price they receive? Connect income, operating costs and family needs without assuming that every fishing business has the same circumstances.

12. Understanding without excusing | Chapter 7

What pressures help explain the conflict involving Jesse and Mike? Which actions still require accountability? Explain why understanding a motive does not automatically justify an action.

13. A chain of consequences | Chapter 7

Trace how interference with fishing gear can affect a fisher, an animal and the wider community. Where could a different choice have interrupted that chain?

14. Evaluating a solution | Chapter 7

The story proposes support and equipment changes. Who benefits, who pays and what questions would a real community need to investigate before adopting a similar plan?

15. Beyond a happy ending | Chapter 7

The negotiated price rises in the novel. Why should readers avoid assuming that every real dispute would end the same way? Name one factor the story does not measure.

16. Conservation with people in it | Chapters 2 and 7

Compare the portrayal of destructive fishing with the portrayal of fishing families. How does this complicate a simple "people versus nature" argument?

Pause and write: Complete: "At first I thought ___. After reading ___, I think ___. I still need to know ___." A changed view is useful when you can explain the evidence behind it.

Discuss: learning that leads somewhere

Questions 17-22

17. A book as a doorway | Chapter 8

Why does Mia's reading assignment become more than homework? Identify a connection between her own experiences and the questions raised by Steinbeck and Ricketts.

18. Different books, shared questions | Chapter 9

Compare Mia's presentation with Jessica's. How can different stories raise related questions about humans, animals and belonging? Use the chapter rather than assuming familiarity with either older book.

19. Looking remotely | Chapter 10

What can a research vehicle reveal that a person on deck cannot see? What might a camera still miss? Suggest one question that would need another kind of measurement.

20. Growing responsibility | Whole book

Choose an early and a late scene. How has Mia's idea of being a guardian expanded? Include a change in understanding, not only a new adventure.

21. A realistic role for readers | Whole book

Which action could a class take without magical powers or specialist training? Identify a trusted adult or organization, a manageable first step and a way to assess progress.

22. Your next investigation | Whole book

Write a question the novel makes you want to investigate. Which source would be a good starting point, and what would make you reconsider your first answer?

Closing circle

Each student shares one character choice they understand better, one scientific question and one remaining uncertainty. Encourage students to distinguish "I disagree" from "I need more information."

Exit ticket: What is one way a conservation plan could help wildlife and people together? What tradeoff might remain?

For a book club: Select questions 1, 9, 12, 16, 20 and 22 for a shorter meeting. Read the chapter map first, and let participants pass on a question or respond through a sketch.

Project 1: A responsible-help flowchart

Turn concern into a thoughtful response

Time: 40-50 minutes. **Materials:** Paper, markers, the novel and a teacher-selected marine mammal response resource. **Product:** A one-page decision chart and a short explanation.

Purpose: Compare Mia's fictional access to animals with the choices available to a real observer. Students practice clear procedural writing without simulating a rescue.

1. Read and notice. Revisit the elephant seal pup and Sandy scenes. Make two columns: what Mia knows through the shell, and what an ordinary observer could actually notice from a distance.

2. Check a current source. Read the Marine Mammal Center's safe-viewing or report-an-animal guidance with an adult. Record the organization and date consulted. Keep the chart appropriate to the place where it would be used; a California contact is not a worldwide response service. [R2]

3. Build the pathway. Start with "I notice a marine mammal that concerns me." Include keeping people and pets back, involving a trusted adult and reporting observations to the appropriate organization. Do not include touching, feeding, pushing an animal into water or attempting to remove gear.

4. Practice with a paper scenario. A seal is resting alone on a beach. Students identify what they know and do not know. Resting alone is not, by itself, a diagnosis of illness. A responder decides what assistance is appropriate.

5. Revise for a younger reader. Exchange charts. Can a partner follow the steps? Are any words vague? Replace "save it" with specific, appropriate observer actions.

Success criteria: The chart separates observation from diagnosis, identifies adult/professional roles, gives a clear sequence and credits its source.

Support: Give students prewritten action cards to arrange. **Extend:** Compare two organizations' regional guidance and explain why contact details and procedures must be checked locally.

Reflection: What did leaving an action out of your chart teach you about responsible help?

Project 2: Create a researched marine ally

Let imagination and evidence work together

Time: 45-60 minutes. **Materials:** Animal photographs, two teacher-approved references, paper and art materials. **Product:** An illustrated character card plus a factual companion panel.

Purpose: Adapt the marine-ally idea from Book 4's reader's guide while distinguishing a literary voice from an animal's measured behavior.

1. Choose an animal. Select a harbor seal, sea lion, elephant seal, sea otter, shark or another species connected to the coast. Identify it precisely enough to research; "seal" can refer to different animals with different needs.

2. Gather four facts. Find habitat, food, one adaptation and one documented human-related pressure. Record the source beside each fact. If sources disagree, note the disagreement and ask an adult to help check it.

3. Invent a voice. Give the ally a name, a personality and a reason to talk with Mia. Write a 100-150-word scene. Label invented thoughts and dialogue as fiction. Do not turn a predator into a villain simply because it eats other animals.

4. Make the companion panel. Present the four facts in the student's own words. Add one question scientists could investigate and one feature of the scene that relies on magic.

5. Review with a partner. The partner marks each statement F for researched fact, I for invention or ? for uncertain. Resolve question marks before exhibiting the work.

Success criteria: Species is identifiable; facts are traceable; the animal's ecological role is explained; fiction is clearly labeled; art supports the explanation.

Support: Offer a fact bank and a six-sentence scene frame. **Extend:** Compare a popular misconception with evidence from a research or aquarium source.

Teacher note: A conservation message can be compelling without claiming that every member of a species thinks or behaves alike. Encourage curiosity rather than human stereotypes.

Share: Make a class gallery titled "Imagined voices, researched lives." Each student explains one change made after checking evidence.

Project 3: Hold a coastal community meeting

Explore fairness, costs and unintended effects

Time: 60 minutes or two 30-minute sessions. **Materials:** Chapter 7, role cards, paper and a timer. **Product:** A recommendation with reasons, a tradeoff and a review plan.

Scenario: A fictional harbor wants to reduce wildlife harm from lost fishing gear while keeping small fishing businesses viable. This is a classroom model, not a description of a current local dispute.

1. Separate the issues. List the novel's concerns: income, equipment costs, gear loss, wildlife, trust and accountability. Do not assume one solution addresses every concern.

2. Assign perspectives. Small groups represent fishing families, wildlife researchers, seafood buyers, harbor staff and residents. Each group identifies one priority, one concern and one question it needs answered. Roles are invented and do not speak for every real person in a profession.

3. Compare options. Consider a gear-retrieval program led by qualified adults, financial support for verified gear improvements, better reporting of lost gear, or a combined plan. Students may propose alternatives. No student activity involves handling fishing equipment on the water.

4. Use a simple decision grid. Score each option from 1-3 for likely wildlife benefit, affordability and ease of checking results. These are judgments, not measured facts. Explain the reasoning beside each score; changing priorities can change the ranking.

5. Meet and revise. Give each group one minute to speak, then take clarification questions. Draft a recommendation that acknowledges a concern from another group and names information still missing.

6. Define a check. Choose a possible indicator, such as reported gear loss or participating businesses. Explain why a change in that number would not prove every effect of the plan.

Success criteria: Uses chapter evidence, represents competing needs fairly, identifies who bears costs and proposes a measurable review.

Support: Reduce to three roles and two options. **Extend:** Add a limited fictional budget and require transparent calculations.

Project 4: Ask an ocean professional

Design questions that lead beyond yes or no

Time: 45 minutes to prepare and synthesize, plus an optional interview. **Materials:** Novel, an adult-selected professional profile or recorded interview, paper. **Product:** A question set and a one-page learning brief.

Purpose: Connect the Western Flyer chapters with the real work of scientists, educators, rehabilitation staff and marine technicians. A recorded public interview is a complete alternative to contacting someone.

1. Start with the book. Choose a moment where Mia benefits from another person's expertise. Write what that person knows or can do, and what remains outside their role.

2. Learn about a real role. Read an institution's staff profile or watch a short educational interview. Identify the person's field and one project before writing questions. Avoid asking for information already answered in the profile.

3. Draft six questions. Include a question about daily work, tools, teamwork, uncertainty, an unexpected result and advice for a curious student. Replace "Do you like sharks?" with "What question about sharks are you trying to answer, and how do you investigate it?"

4. Rehearse listening. Partners practice a follow-up beginning "Could you explain..." or "What evidence led to..." Do not interrupt to move through the entire list if an answer deserves attention.

5. Gather answers. A teacher may arrange a visit or use a public recording. Obtain permission before recording a live guest. Students should not independently contact strangers or publish personal contact details.

6. Synthesize. Write three things learned, one connection to the novel, one uncertainty the professional described and one next question. Distinguish a direct quotation from a paraphrase; credit the speaker and source.

Success criteria: Questions fit the person's expertise, answers are represented accurately and the final brief explains how knowledge is developed.

Support: Supply a question bank. **Extend:** Compare two careers that collaborate on the same problem.

Reflection: How did the answer change your original question?

Six invitations to write

Choose a form, then revise for an audience

Aim for a thoughtful paragraph or 150-300 words, adjusted to the learner. Every response should connect to a specific scene. Invented dialogue must be presented as fiction.

1. A release-day report | Chapters 3 and 5

Write for a school newsletter about Sandy's rehabilitation and release. Explain the roles of trained staff and what the event does, and does not, tell you about the animal's future. Separate story events from independently checked facts.

2. The coast from another viewpoint | Chapter 4 or 6

Retell a short moment from an imagined marine ally's perspective. Include two researched details about its habitat and label the narrator's thoughts as invention. Add a brief factual note after the story.

3. A letter that acknowledges a concern | Chapter 7

Recommend a response to the fictional harbor dispute. State your proposal, explain who it helps and acknowledge one cost or objection. End with a question that the community should investigate.

4. A conversation across a disagreement | Chapter 7

Write a dialogue between two invented community members who disagree. Each must ask a sincere question, accurately restate the other's concern and identify one shared goal. Agreement on everything is not required.

5. From a reading log to an expedition log | Chapters 8-10

Write two entries: one before Mia's Western Flyer visit and one after it. Show a question becoming more precise. Include a detail from the novel and identify something she would need to research next.

6. What does a guardian do? | Whole book

Write a short argument about the quality Mia most needs: courage, patience, curiosity, cooperation or another quality you can defend. Support it with two scenes and consider why a different reader might choose another quality.

Revision checklist: Is my main idea clear? Are my chapter references accurate? Have I distinguished fact from invention? Did I consider someone else's perspective? Does the ending add meaning rather than repeat the beginning?

Teacher response notes

Look for reasoning, not one prescribed opinion

1-3: Strong responses connect concern to restraint, expand from individual welfare to habitat effects, and separate directly observed damage from claims about a person's intent. Accept different examples when the text supports them.

4-5: Students should notice that rehabilitation involves specialist care over time. Check that they distinguish the elephant seal pup from Sandy the harbor seal; do not merge their injuries or locations.

6-8: Look for a nuanced view of predators and recognition that animal speech supplies information only in the fantasy. Scientific alternatives might include observation, tracking or samples, depending on the question. No method answers everything.

9-10: Release is a meaningful milestone, not a guarantee of a particular lifespan. The Mavericks comparison should include the hidden underwater habitat as well as human relationships with the place.

11-13: Invite explanations of economic pressure without endorsing sabotage. A useful consequence chain links actions to equipment, livelihoods and wildlife rather than treating conflict as a contest between entirely good and bad groups.

14-16: Strong answers ask who pays, who can participate and how effectiveness is checked. The novel's price outcome is fictional evidence about the plot, not a real-world prediction. Students should distinguish unlawful or destructive actions from all fishing activity.

17-19: Reading can generate questions that direct exploration. Students need not have read The Log from the Sea of Cortez or The Call of the Wild. ROV footage offers a particular view and may need other measurements for context. [R3]

20-22: Accept different growth arcs if supported by early and late scenes. A feasible class action names an adult-supported role and a small first step. Good inquiry questions can be narrowed and revised.

Misconceptions to address gently

- Native purple urchins are not an invasive species merely because a habitat has many of them. [R1]
- A resting marine mammal is not automatically abandoned or in need of human handling. [R2]
- New equipment is not automatically affordable, effective in every setting or free of tradeoffs.
- Understanding a character's pressures does not require approving the character's conduct.

Feedback frame: "Your detail supports ___. To strengthen your reasoning, explain ___ or investigate ___."

Student sheet: evidence and perspective

Name: _____ Date: _____

A choice worth examining

Chapter and situation: Who faces a decision, and what is happening?

Text detail: Describe an action or a short passage that helps you understand the choice. Record the chapter; add a page number only for your own copy.

My interpretation: What does this detail suggest? Explain the connection.

Another perspective: Who else is affected? What might they want or worry about?

A distinction: What do I know from the story, and what would need real-world research?

After discussion: What did I add, revise or decide to investigate?

Student sheet: a plan with tradeoffs

Name: _____ Project: _____

Our question and proposed response:

Evidence or sources we used:

Who benefits? Who bears a cost or needs a voice?

One uncertainty and a way to investigate it:

How we would check whether our response helped:

A simple assessment rubric

Score each area 1-3. Use the profile to guide revision, not to rank students' concern for the ocean.

Evidence: 1 = opinion with little support; 2 = relevant scene or source; 3 = multiple details connected clearly to the claim.

Perspective: 1 = only one viewpoint; 2 = another viewpoint named; 3 = competing needs explained fairly.

Reasoning: 1 = solution asserted; 2 = benefit explained; 3 = benefit, tradeoff and uncertainty considered.

Communication: 1 = difficult to follow; 2 = clear main idea; 3 = clear organization, credited sources and a useful revision.

My strongest area / next step:

Curriculum, extensions and sources

Connections across subjects

Language arts: Characterization, evidence, point of view, comparison, procedural writing and argument. **Science:** Habitats, human impacts, observation and limits of evidence. **Social studies:** Livelihoods, community decisions and shared resources. **Mathematics:** Comparing options and explaining the assumptions behind a simple scoring model.

These are suggested curriculum connections, not a claim of alignment with a particular jurisdiction's standards. Adapt expectations to the class.

Before reading: Ask students to sketch who depends on a healthy coast. **During reading:** Add new stakeholders and label connections. **After reading:** Revise the sketch and explain two changes.

Extensions: Use a public aquarium or research video; compare a fictional animal voice with a field observation; explore Western Flyer's history; invite an educator through the school. A field trip is optional, and access or programming should be checked before planning.

Source notes and further reading

Primary text: Luke Kilpatrick, Guardian of the Coast, Book 2, print proof ISBN 9798992482881. Chapter references work across editions. The projects and worksheets are new teaching material using Book 4's included guide as the structural model.

R1. Monterey Bay Aquarium, Purple sea urchin. Species and ecological background.

https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-the-ocean/animals-a-to-z/purple-sea-urchin

R2. The Marine Mammal Center, Safe Wildlife Viewing. Appropriate observer behavior; consult regional response guidance when needed.

https://www.marinemammalcenter.org/animal-care/patient-journey/rescue/safe-wildlife-viewing

R3. MBARI, ROV Doc Ricketts. An example of remotely operated research technology.

https://www.mbari.org/technology/rov-doc-ricketts/

R4. Western Flyer Foundation, The Sea of Cortez Expedition. Historical context for the ship and the 1940 voyage.

https://www.westernflyer.org/the-boat/the-sea-of-cortez-expedition/

Resources checked November 11, 2026. These institutions are research resources, not sponsors or endorsers of the novel or guide.

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