

Who Helps at the Shore?: teacher guide

Teacher guide. Keep separate from student materials.

Grade band	Pre-K
Subjects	Science, History and Social Science, English Language Arts
Towns	Rockport
Duration	One 25-minute circle time plus a 5-minute weather chart routine on five morning (50 minutes total) (sequence totals 50 minutes)
Prerequisites	Children can follow a simple stop and go game.; Children have looked out a window to talk about the weather at least once.
Essential question	How do lighthouses, weather watchers and helpers keep people safe at the shore?
Version	1.0, 2026-10-05
Review status	Draft: awaiting classroom teacher review
Lesson ID	CAC - LES - 002

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Children will be able to tell one way a lighthouse helps boats.
- Children will be able to observe the weather and choose the matching word for the class weather chart (sunny, cloudy, rainy, windy, foggy or snowy).
- Children will be able to give one example of how weather changes what people, animals or boats do.
- Children will be able to use a helping sentence such as Can you help me, please? in role play.

Massachusetts curriculum frameworks

Code	Standard (verbatim) and source	How this lesson addresses it
PreK-ESS2-4(MA)	Use simple instruments to collect and record data on elements of daily weather, including sun or clouds, wind, snow or rain, and higher or lower temperature. Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework (2016), Pre-K. Official framework , page PDF p. 32 (printed p. 29).	Children use a wind streamer, a rain cup and a window thermometer to observe and record daily weather on the class chart.
PreK-ESS2-6(MA)	Provide examples of the impact of weather on living things. Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework (2016), Pre-K. Official framework , page PDF p. 32 (printed p. 29).	Children give examples of how weather changes what boats, birds and people do at the shore.

Code	Standard (verbatim) and source	How this lesson addresses it
PreK.T4, standard 1	With prompting and support, describe some things people do when they work inside and outside of the home, drawing on personal experience, literature, and informational texts. History and Social Science Curriculum Framework (2018), Pre-K. Official framework , page PDF p. 29.	Children describe the work of lighthouse keepers and other shore helpers.
RI.PK.1	With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about an informational text read aloud. English Language Arts and Literacy Curriculum Framework (2017), Pre-K. Official framework , page PDF p. 29 (printed p. 26).	Children answer questions about the read-aloud on the Thatcher Island Twin Lights.
SL.PK.3	Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood. English Language Arts and Literacy Curriculum Framework (2017), Pre-K. Official framework , page PDF p. 32 (printed p. 29).	Children practice asking a helper for help and asking a question when they do not understand.

Standards checked against the official Massachusetts DESE framework documents on Oct. 5, 2026.

Materials

- A flashlight (one for the teacher; optional extra flashlights for small groups)
- Two cardboard tubes or two tall block towers to stand for the twin lighthouses
- Large word cards: SUNNY, CLOUDY, RAINY, WINDY, FOGGY, SNOWY
- A wind streamer (a ribbon or crepe paper strip taped to a stick) or a pinwheel
- A clear plastic cup set outside as a rain cup
- A simple outdoor or window thermometer, or a cup of water set outside to feel warmer or colder
- Chart paper ruled into a weather chart (see the data sheet), or the printed weather chart
- A soft scarf or a piece of thin white fabric to stand for fog
- Clipboard with the observation checklist

Setup

Build two tall towers side by side from blocks or cardboard tubes and set them at one end of the rug. Tape the wind streamer near a window or take it outside. Put the rain cup outside where it can catch rain. Draw the weather chart on chart paper with the days of the week down the left side and the six weather words across the top, or print the data sheet. Practice the flashlight signal: on for a slow count of two, then off.

Teaching sequence

4 minutes Welcome: what is a lighthouse?

Teacher: Turn off the room lights. Hold up the flashlight and switch it on. Say: "This is my lighthouse light. A lighthouse is a tall tower with a big light at the top. It shines at night so boats can see where to go." Switch it off

and on. Ask: "Have you ever seen a lighthouse? What did it look like?"

Students: Watch the light, say lighthouse together and share what they know.

7 minutes Read-aloud: The Twin Lights of Thacher Island

Teacher: Turn the room lights back on. Point to the two towers on the rug. Read passage R1 and stop at each star to ask the question. Say: "Twins are two that match. These two lighthouses match, so people call them the Twin Lights."

Students: Listen, answer the stop questions and ask their own questions about the lighthouses.

6 minutes Game: Lighthouse Says

Teacher: Say: "You are all little boats. When my light is on, you can sail. When my light goes off, stop and look. When I say Fog! and wave the scarf, move very slowly and listen for my horn." Make a horn sound: "Hoooo." Play three or four rounds. Then say: "Lighthouses help boats know where to go and where the rocks are."

Students: Move like boats, stop when the light goes off and move slowly in the pretend fog.

5 minutes Asking a helper

Teacher: Say: "At the shore, there are helpers: lighthouse keepers, lifeguards, the harbormaster and the Coast Guard. If you need help, you can ask. Say it with me: Can you help me, please?" Act out two quick scenes with a child: a lost mitten at the beach and a question about where the bathroom is. Ask: "What can you say if you do not understand? Say it with me: Can you say that again, please?"

Students: Repeat the helping sentences and take turns being the helper and the person asking.

3 minutes First weather check

Teacher: Take children to the window or outside. Say: "Weather watchers look at the sky and feel the air. Let's be weather watchers." Ask: "Is the sun out? Are there clouds? Is our streamer moving? Is it warm or cold?" Hold up the word cards and read each one. Let the class choose. Write the word on the chart for today.

Students: Look and feel, then choose the weather word with a thumbs up and help mark the chart.

25 minutes Weather chart routine (five mornings, 5 minutes each)

Teacher: Each morning for the next five days, repeat the weather check. Choose one child as the Weather Watcher of the day. Say: "Weather Watcher, look at the sky. What do you see? Look at our streamer. Is it moving? Check our rain cup. Is there water in it?" Mark the chart. Then ask one impact question, such as "Would a fishing boat go out today? Would a bird fly far today? What should we wear outside?" On day five, count the marks together and ask: "What weather did we have the most?"

Students: Take turns as Weather Watcher, check the streamer, rain cup and thermometer and tell how the weather changes what people, animals or boats do.

Background for the teacher

Thacher Island lies off Rockport. The Thacher Island Association says the first twin lights on the island were built in 1771 and that the current matching granite towers were completed in 1861. The association describes them as the

only operating twin lighthouses in America and says there are 156 steps to the top. It says the lights marked a dangerous reef called the Londoner. The U.S. Coast Guard deeded the southern 28 acres of the island and its buildings to the Town of Rockport in 2002; the north end and the North Tower belong to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and are managed by the town. Today keepers land boats, help visitors and do daily upkeep. Sources give slightly different tower heights (123 or 124 feet), so this lesson says only that the towers are very tall. Points are set to 0 because this is an observation-based lesson.

Handling sensitive topics

This lesson focuses on light, weather and helpers. It does not mention shipwrecks, injuries or loss, and the teacher should not add them for this age. If a child asks whether boats crash on the rocks, say: "That is why the lighthouse is there. It helps boats see the rocks and stay away." If a child seems worried about storms, reassure them that boats stay in the harbor in bad weather and that many helpers watch the sea.

Discussion prompts

- Why do you think the lighthouses are so tall?
- What helpers have you seen at the beach or by the water?
- What do you wear when it is rainy? When it is sunny?
- What do birds do when it is very windy?
- Who could you ask for help if you got lost at the beach?

Formative checks

- During Lighthouse Says, does the child stop when the light goes off and slow down in the fog?
- During the weather check, can the child say or point to the word card that matches the sky?
- Can the child repeat or use a helping sentence in role play?

Assessment

Be the Weather Watcher for a day: check the weather, choose the word for the chart and tell one thing a boat, a bird or a person might do in that weather.

Points: 0

Answer guidance

A1

- Look for children stopping when the light goes off and moving slowly in the pretend fog.
- Listen for a child explaining that the light helps boats see where to go or where the rocks are.

A2

- Accept Can you help me, please? or any polite request in English or a home language.
- Accept Can you say that again, please? or What? or a puzzled gesture as an emerging request to clarify.
- Look for the helper responding with words or actions.

A3

- Answers depend on the day. Check that the chosen word matches what the class can see and feel.
- Wind: the streamer or pinwheel moves. Rain: water in the cup or drops on the window. Fog: it is hard to see far away.
- Impact examples: boats stay in the harbor on stormy days; birds stay close to shore in strong wind; people wear raincoats in rain and sun hats in sun.

Rubric

Criterion	4	3	2	1
Observes and records weather	Names the weather using two clues (for example, the sky and the streamer) and marks the chart.	Chooses the matching weather word and marks the chart.	Chooses a weather word with adult prompting.	Looks outside but does not yet choose a weather word.
Tells how weather affects living things	Gives two examples of how weather changes what people, animals or boats do.	Gives one example in their own words.	Agrees with or repeats an adult's example.	Does not yet give an example.
Describes how lighthouses and helpers keep people safe	Tells why a lighthouse shines and names another shore helper.	Tells one way a lighthouse or a helper keeps people safe.	Shows understanding through the game or role play, without words yet.	Participates but does not yet show understanding.
Asks for help or clarification	Uses a helping sentence on their own in role play or real life.	Uses a helping sentence in role play with a model.	Repeats part of the sentence or uses a gesture to ask for help.	Does not yet ask for help in role play.

Differentiation

Multilingual learners

- Pair each weather word with a gesture: sunny (arms in a circle overhead), rainy (fingers falling), windy (sway), foggy (hands over eyes, peeking), cloudy (hands puffing out), snowy (fingers floating slowly).

- Teach the helping sentence in English and invite families to share it in their home language for the class to learn.
- Use the flashlight and the two towers to show meaning before reading the passage.

Students with disabilities

- In Lighthouse Says, a child may play seated, moving a toy boat on the floor instead of walking.
- For a child who is sensitive to darkness, keep a soft light on during the flashlight game.
- Offer a choice of two weather word cards instead of six; the child may point, eye-gaze or touch the card.
- For children who are deaf or hard of hearing, replace the horn sound with a hand signal for fog.

Advanced learners

- Ask the child to compare two days on the chart: Was today more windy or less windy than yesterday?
- Invite the child to count the steps on a staircase at school and compare the number to the lighthouse's more than 150 steps.
- Ask: Why do you think there are two lights instead of one?

Print, low-bandwidth and extension options

Print: Print the read-aloud passage, the word cards and the weather chart data sheet.

Low bandwidth: No screen needed. A flashlight, blocks and the printed chart are enough.

Extensions:

- Build a lighthouse from blocks or cups at the block center and use a flashlight at the top.
- Keep the weather chart going for a whole month and count the sunny and rainy days together.
- Invite a lifeguard, harbormaster or Coast Guard member to visit and talk about how they help.
- Families who live in Rockport can look for the Twin Lights from the shore on a clear day.

Google Classroom: ready to paste

Assignment title: Who Helps at the Shore? Weather Watchers

Student instructions:

Grown-ups: please read this with your child. Look out a window together and ask: Is it sunny, cloudy, rainy, windy, foggy or snowy? Help your child say what a boat, a bird or a person might do in that weather. Practice the helping sentence together: Can you help me, please?

Suggested points: 0

Attach:

- **student-handout.docx**: Make a copy for each student
- **slides.pptx**: Students can view file
- **data-sheet.xlsx**: Make a copy for each student

Never attach the teacher guide to student work. See [how to use this lesson in Google Classroom](#).

Citations and rights

- Thacher Island Association, Thacher Island. <https://thacherisland.org/thacher-island/>. Facts only, in our words; Thacher Island Association page

Lesson text by Cape Ann Current, free to use and adapt under our [Free Access and Attribution Policy](#). Credit: "Source: Cape Ann Current." with a link to <https://capeanncurrent.com/classroom/who-helps-at-the-shore/>. Public domain excerpts remain public domain; other sources keep their own terms, listed above. Version 1.0, 2026-10-05. Draft: awaiting classroom teacher review.