



## Section 4: Water Column Investigations for Volume 2: How Do We Explore?



NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*: America's Ship for Ocean Exploration.  
Image credit: NOAA. For more information, see the following  
Web site:  
<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/welcome.html>

### What's a CTD?

#### Focus

Measuring physical properties of seawater for ocean exploration

#### Grade Level

5-6 (Physical Science)

#### Focus Question

What is the relationship between temperature, salinity, pressure, and the density of seawater, and why is this important to ocean exploration aboard the *Okeanos Explorer*?

#### Learning Objectives

- Students will define “CTD” and explain how this instrument is used aboard the *Okeanos Explorer*.
- Students will explain how relationships between temperature, salinity, pressure, and density in seawater are useful to ocean explorers.
- Students will use data from the *Okeanos Explorer* to create and interpret graphs of temperature, salinity, and depth.

#### Materials

- Copies of *CTD Data Collected on Okeanos Explorer Cruise EX1004, Leg 3 Worksheet*; one copy for each student or student group
- Graph paper

#### Audio Visual Materials

- Video projector or large screen monitor for showing downloaded videos (see Learning Procedure, Step 2)

#### Teaching Time

One or two 45-minute class periods

#### Seating Arrangement

Groups of three to four students

#### Maximum Number of Students

30

#### Key Words and Concepts

Ocean Exploration  
*Okeanos Explorer*



CTD  
Salinity  
Density

## Background Information

*NOTE: Explanations and procedures in this lesson are written at a level appropriate to professional educators. In presenting and discussing this material with students, educators may need to adapt the language and instructional approach to styles that are best suited to specific student groups.*

On August 13, 2008, the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* was commissioned as “America’s Ship for Ocean Exploration;” the only U.S. ship whose sole assignment is to systematically explore Earth’s largely unknown ocean. The strategy for accomplishing this mission is to use state-of-the-art technologies to search the ocean for anomalies; things that are unusual and unexpected. When an anomaly is found, the exploration strategy shifts to obtaining more detailed information about the anomaly and the surrounding area. An important concept underlying this strategy is the distinction between exploration and research. As a ship of discovery, the role of *Okeanos Explorer* is to locate new features in the deep ocean, and conduct preliminary investigations that provide enough data to justify follow-up by future expeditions.

The *Okeanos Explorer* strategy involves three major activities:

- Underway reconnaissance;
- Water column exploration; and
- Site characterization.

Underway reconnaissance involves mapping the ocean floor and water column while the ship is underway, and using other sensors to measure chemical and physical properties of seawater. Water column exploration involves making measurements of chemical and physical properties “from top to bottom” while the ship is stopped. In some cases these measurements may be made routinely at pre-selected locations, while in other cases they may be made to decide whether an area with suspected anomalies should be more thoroughly investigated. Site characterization involves more detailed exploration of a specific region, including obtaining high quality imagery, making measurements of chemical and physical seawater properties, and obtaining appropriate samples.

In addition to state-of-the-art navigation and ship operation equipment, this strategy depends upon four types of technology:

- Telepresence;
- Multibeam sonar mapping;
- CTD (an instrument that measures conductivity, temperature, and depth) and other electronic sensors to measure chemical and physical seawater properties; and
- A Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) capable of obtaining high-quality imagery and samples in depths as great as 4,000 meters.

In many ways, telepresence is the key to the *Okeanos Explorer*’s exploration strategy. This technology allows people to observe and interact with events at a remote location. The *Okeanos Explorer*’s telepresence capability is based on advanced broadband satellite communication through which live images can be transmitted



NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*: America’s Ship for Ocean Exploration.  
Image credit: NOAA. For more information, see the following Web site:  
<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/welcome.html>

### **Okeanos Explorer Vital Statistics:**

Commissioned: August 13, 2008; Seattle, Washington  
Length: 224 feet  
Breadth: 43 feet  
Draft: 15 feet  
Displacement: 2,298.3 metric tons  
Berthing: 46, including crew and mission support  
Operations: Ship crewed by NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and civilians through NOAA’s Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO); Mission equipment operated by NOAA’s Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

For more information, visit <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/welcome.html>.  
Follow voyages of America’s ship for ocean exploration with the *Okeanos Explorer* Atlas at [http://www.ncddc.noaa.gov/website/google\\_maps/OkeanosExplorer/mapsOkeanos.htm](http://www.ncddc.noaa.gov/website/google_maps/OkeanosExplorer/mapsOkeanos.htm)

from the seafloor to scientists ashore, classrooms, and newsrooms, and opens new educational opportunities that are a major part of *Okeanos Explorer's* mission for advancement of knowledge.

In the summer of 2010, years of planning, field trials, and state-of-the-art technology came together for the first time on the ship's maiden voyage as part of the INDEX-SATAL 2010 Expedition. This expedition was an international collaboration between scientists from the United States and Indonesia to explore the deep ocean in the Sangihe Talaud Region. This region is located in the 'Coral Triangle', which is the global heart of shallow-water marine biodiversity. A major objective of the expedition was to advance our understanding of undersea ecosystems, particularly those associated with submarine volcanoes and hydrothermal vents. Among the Expedition's many "firsts," this was the first time scientists have been able to use an underwater robot to get a first-hand look at deepwater biodiversity in the waters of the Sangihe Talaud Region. For more information about the INDEX-SATAL 2010 Expedition, see <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/welcome.html>.



One of the most exciting and significant scientific discoveries in the history of ocean science was made in 1977 at a divergent plate boundary near the Galapagos Islands. Here, researchers found large numbers of animals that had never been seen before clustered around underwater hot springs flowing from cracks in the lava seafloor. Similar hot springs, known as hydrothermal vents, have since been found in many other locations where underwater volcanic processes are active. Hydrothermal vents are formed when the movement of tectonic plates causes deep cracks to form in the ocean floor. Seawater flows into these cracks, is heated by magma, and then rises back to the surface of the seafloor. The water does not boil because of the high pressure in the deep ocean, but may reach temperatures higher than 350° C. This superheated water dissolves minerals in Earth's crust. Hydrothermal vents are locations where the superheated water erupts through the seafloor. The temperature of the surrounding water is near-freezing, which causes some of the dissolved minerals to precipitate from the solution. This makes the hot water plume look like black smoke, and in some cases the precipitated minerals form chimneys or towers.

The presence of thriving biological communities in the deep ocean was a complete surprise, because it had been assumed that food energy resources would be scarce in an environment without sunlight to support photosynthesis. Researchers soon discovered that the organisms responsible for this biological abundance do not need photosynthesis, but instead are able to obtain energy from chemical reactions through processes known as chemosynthesis. Photosynthesis and chemosynthesis both require a source of energy that is transferred through a series of chemical reactions into organic molecules that living organisms may use as food. In photosynthesis, light provides this energy. In chemosynthesis, the energy comes from other chemical reactions. Energy for chemosynthesis in the vicinity of hydrothermal vents often comes from hydrogen sulfide.

Hydrothermal vents and chemosynthetic communities are often associated with changes in the chemical properties of seawater. To look for these changes, ocean explorers use an instrument known as a CTD, which stands for conductivity, temperature, and depth. A CTD is a package of electronic instruments that measure these properties. Conductivity is a measure of how well a solution conducts electricity and is directly related to salinity, which is the concentration of salt and other inorganic compounds in seawater. Salinity is one of the most basic measurements used by ocean scientists. When combined with temperature data, salinity measurements can be used to determine seawater density which is a primary driving force for major ocean currents. Often, CTDs are attached to a much larger metal frame called a rosette, which may hold water sampling bottles that are used to collect water at different depths, as well as other sensors that can measure additional physical or chemical properties.

Temperature measurements from CTD sensors can be used to detect changes in water temperature that may indicate the presence of volcanoes or hydrothermal vents. Masses of seawater with unusual characteristics are called plumes, and are usually found within a few hundred meters of the ocean floor. Since underwater volcanoes and hydrothermal vents may be several thousand meters deep, ocean explorers often raise and lower a CTD rosette through several hundred meters near the bottom as the ship slowly cruises over the area being surveyed. This repeated up-and-down motion of the towed CTD may resemble the movement of a yo-yo; a resemblance that has led to the nickname “tow-yo” for this type of CTD sampling. See [http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/technology/tools/sonde\\_ctd/sondectd.html](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/technology/tools/sonde_ctd/sondectd.html) and <http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/vents/PlumeStudies/WhatsACTD/CTDMethods.html> for more information.

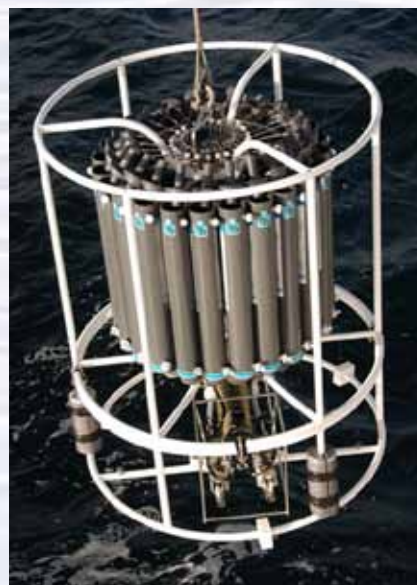
The density of sea water depends on temperature, salinity, and pressure. The mathematical relationship between these factors in somewhat complicated, and is known as the “equation of state” of seawater. There are several online calculators,

### CTD Systems Aboard *Okeanos Explorer*

The *Okeanos Explorer* is equipped with a Seabird Electronics Model 9/11+ CTD system mounted on an SBE 32 rosette frame. This rosette includes 24 sampling bottles that can be individually triggered to collect samples at various depths. On many CTD casts, additional sensors to measure oxidation reduction potential and optical backscatter are added to the instrument package, because these parameters can also signal the presence of hydrothermal vents and reducing communities.

The SBE 9+ CTD unit has a depth rating of 6,800 meters. The ship also carries an expendable bathythermograph (XBT) that is used to measure the velocity of sound in the ocean at various depths. This information is needed by the multibeam sonar system to collect accurate bathymetric data.

*Note: Mention of proprietary names does not imply endorsement by NOAA.*



A CTD rosette is lowered to measure the salinity, temperature, depth and concentration of particles in the water column. Scientists use particle concentration and oxygen reduction potential as the most sensitive indicators of hydrothermal plumes. Image courtesy of NOAA *Okeanos Explorer* Program, INDEX-SATAL 2010.

[http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/june27/media/ex\\_ctd.html](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/june27/media/ex_ctd.html)



Plot showing light scattering (dNTU) sensor and oxygen reduction potential (ORP) data, versus time, acquired by the CTD/rosette as it passed through a plume overtop of Kawio Barat volcano. There was an intense particle anomaly and ORP decrease in the bottom 30 meters of the water column when the plume was encountered. A drop in the ORP, like you see here, means that there are more electron donor compounds in the water produced by enrichment of seawater in dissolved metals and chemicals billowing out of hydrothermal vents. The ORP values begin to increase again, recovering slowly, when the CTD leaves the plume. Image courtesy of Sharon Walker, PMEL.

[http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/hires/kawio\\_barat\\_hires.jpg](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/hires/kawio_barat_hires.jpg)



One of the online seawater density calculators.

<http://www.es.flinders.edu.au/~mattom/Utilities/density.html>

### STEM Connections

Ocean exploration aboard the *Okeanos Explorer* is a real-world example of STEM concepts in action:

**Science** provides the overall objective – to

better understand Earth's ocean – as well as a methodology for systematically acquiring this understanding;

**Technology** includes the tools, systems and processes that have been made to make deep-ocean exploration possible;

**Engineering** designs the technologies that can function in the deep-ocean environment;

**Mathematics** provides the basis for measurements, data analysis, and engineering design.

With increasing attention to developing integrated approaches to STEM education and technological literacy, the How Do We Explore? theme offers an exciting context for educators who wish to bring more STEM content to their classrooms.

To assist with such efforts, most lessons developed for the *How Do We Explore?* theme identify opportunities to include specific benchmarks and standards for technological literacy that have been developed by the International Technology and Engineering Education Association (ITEA, 2007). While these standards have not been widely adopted, they provide useful guidance for efforts to enhance STEM content in advance of its inclusion in formal curricula.

In addition, the *How Do We Explore?* suite of lessons includes activities that are intended to provide opportunities to apply design processes, build technological devices, and develop some of the hands-on abilities that are an integral part of most concepts about STEM education. These activities are directly tied to the technologies and scientific methodologies used for ocean exploration aboard the *Okeanos Explorer*.

For more information, see: [http://www.iteaconnect.org/TAA/Publications/TAA\\_Publications.html](http://www.iteaconnect.org/TAA/Publications/TAA_Publications.html)

though, that compute density of seawater from input values of temperature, salinity, and pressure. The density of seawater is always greater than 1.000 g/cm<sup>3</sup> and less than 2.000 g/cm<sup>3</sup>, so oceanographers often express density as sigma ( $\sigma$ ), which is [(Sea water density - 1) x 1000]. This way, oceanographers do not have to write 1 or the decimal places every time they want to record a density measurement.

This lesson introduces students to simple analysis of CTD data, how these data are related to seawater density, and how they may be used to search for hydrothermal vents.

### Learning Procedure

1. To prepare for this lesson:

a) Review:

- Introductory essays for the INDEX-SATAL 2010 Expedition (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/welcome.html>);
- Background information on CTD technology at <http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/vents/PlumeStudies/WhallsACTD/CTDMethods.html>

(b) Review background information about the *Okeanos Explorer* exploration strategy and technologies.

(c) If students are not familiar with deep-sea chemosynthetic communities, you may want to use Multimedia Discovery Mission Lesson 5, Chemosynthesis and Hydrothermal Vent Life (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/learning/welcome.html>), and/or information from <http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/vents/nemo/explorer.html>.

(d) Review procedures on the *CTD Data Collected on Okeanos Explorer Cruise EX1004, Leg 3 Worksheet*.

(e) If desired, download images referenced in Step 2.

2. Briefly introduce the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* and the INDEX-SATAL 2010 Expedition. Briefly discuss why this kind of exploration is important (for background information, please see the lesson, *Earth's Ocean is 95% Unexplored: So What?*; [http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/background/edu/media/so\\_what.pdf](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/background/edu/media/so_what.pdf)). Highlight the overall exploration strategy used by *Okeanos Explorer*, including the following points:

- The overall strategy is based on finding anomalies;
- This strategy involves
  - Underway reconnaissance;
  - Water column exploration; and
  - Site characterization;
- This strategy relies on four key technologies:
  - Multibeam sonar mapping system;
  - CTD and other electronic sensors to measure chemical and physical seawater properties;
  - A Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) capable of obtaining high-quality imagery and samples in depths as great as 4,000 meters; and
  - Telepresence technologies that allow people to observe and interact with events at a remote location.

You may want to show some or all of the images in the adjacent sidebar to accompany this review.



3. If students are familiar with the concepts of seawater density, briefly review:
- The definition of density;
  - The relationships between temperature, salinity, pressure, and density in seawater; and
  - The meaning of conductivity and its relationship to salinity.

When this review is complete, proceed to Step 4.

If students are not familiar with these concepts, perform the following demonstrations:

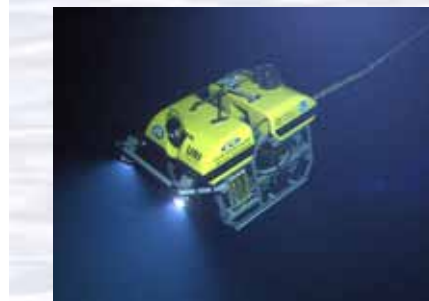
(a) While students watch, dissolve 2 tablespoons of table salt in approximately 250 ml of hot tap water. Add three drops of liquid food coloring, and stir to mix. Wait at least three minutes. Pour approximately 400 ml of hot tap water into a clear 500 ml beaker. Hold the beaker so that the water is visible to students, and slowly pour the colored salt water down along the inside wall of the beaker. A shimmering pool of colored water should form on the bottom of the beaker, below the uncolored tap water. Have students record their observations in writing.

(b) While students watch, place approximate 100 ml of ice into a container with approximately 150 ml cool tap water. Add three drops of liquid food coloring. Pour approximately 400 ml of hot tap water into a clear 500 ml beaker. Tell students to watch closely as you hold the beaker so that the water is visible to students, and slowly pour the colored ice water down along the inside wall of the beaker. The colored water will flow to the bottom of the beaker and form a layer beneath the warmer water, but will soon disperse into the larger volume of water. Have students record their observations in writing, being sure to include what happened when the colored ice water first flowed into the warmer water.

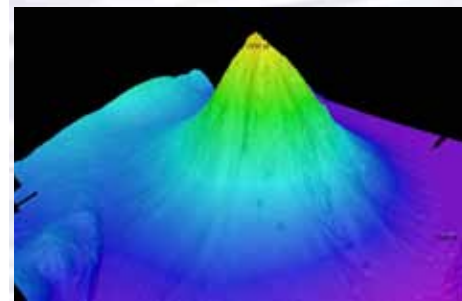
Remind students that the density of a substance is related to an object's mass (how "heavy" it is) and volume (the object's physical size). A handful of styrofoam, for example, weighs much less than a handful of rocks because the density of the styrofoam is less than the density of the rocks. Density is usually defined as "mass per unit volume," and the density of an object or substance is stated in "grams per cubic centimeter."

Have students record their inferences about the effect of dissolved salt on the density of water, and the effect of temperature on the density of water. When students have finished writing, lead a discussion of their inferences. Students should understand that dissolved salt increases the density of water, and that the density of water also increases as temperature decreases. Tell students that in the ocean, density is also affected by water pressure. Since water pressure increases with increasing depth, the density of seawater also increases as depth increases.

4. Show an image of a CTD, and explain that this is actually a collection of several electronic instruments that measure various things about seawater. The basic instruments measure temperature, depth, and conductivity. Tell students that conductivity measures how easily electric currents pass through a liquid, and that electric current passes much more easily through water containing salt than through fresh water. Also say that CTDs actually measure water pressure as a way to measure depth.



The ROV Little Hercules descends through deep water to an undersea volcano in the Celebes Sea to search for hydrothermal vents and associated ecosystems. Image courtesy of NOAA *Okeanos Explorer* Program, INDEX-SATAL 2010  
[http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/hires/1june29\\_hires.jpg](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/hires/1june29_hires.jpg)



*Okeanos Explorer*'s EM302 multibeam sonar mapping system produced this detailed image of the Kawio Barat seamount, which rises around 3800 meters from the seafloor. Image courtesy of NOAA *Okeanos Explorer* Program, INDEX-SATAL 2010  
[http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/hires/june26fig1\\_hires.jpg](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/hires/june26fig1_hires.jpg)



Scientists in the Exploration Command Center at NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory in Seattle view live video from the *Okeanos Explorer*'s ROV. Image courtesy NOAA  
<http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/images/headlines/ecc.jpg>



Senior Survey Technician Elaine Stuart holds onto the CTD as it comes aboard the *Okeanos Explorer*. Image courtesy NOAA  
<http://www.moc.noaa.gov/oe/visitor/photos/photospage-b/CAP%20015.jpg>



A CTD is attached to a metal frame called a rosette, or carousel along with numerous water sampling bottles. This "hydrocast" is deployed off the side of a vessel, and provides information about the composition of the water column.

[http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/technology/tools/sonde\\_ctd/media/ciwsam1.html](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/technology/tools/sonde_ctd/media/ciwsam1.html)

Figure 1.

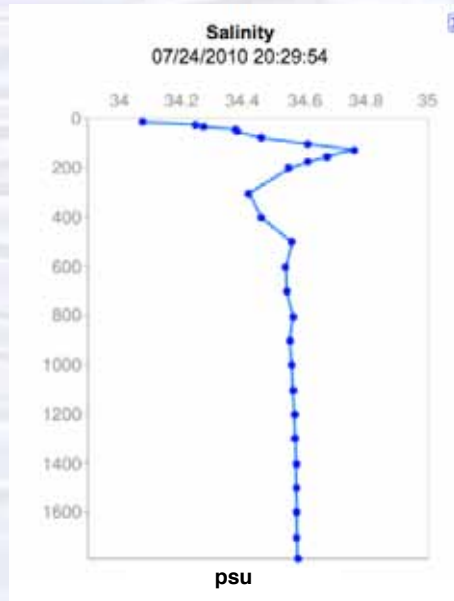
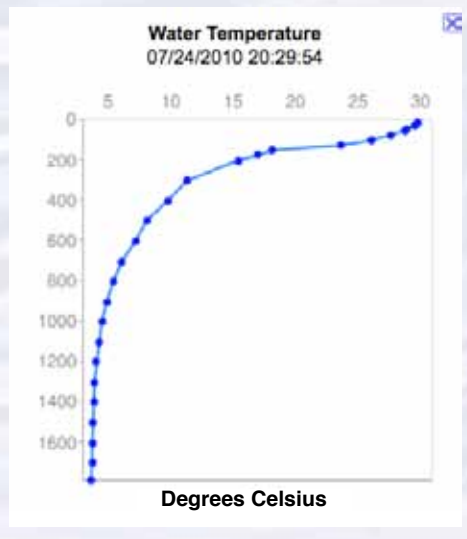


Figure 2.



Most of the device seen in the image is a water sampling device called a rosette or carousel, that contains water sampling bottles that are used to collect water at different depths. Before the CTD is lowered into the ocean, the bottles are opened so that water flows freely through them. As the CTD travels through the water column, scientists can monitor readings from the sensors. If something unusual appears in the measurements, the scientists can send a signal through the CTD cable that closes one or more of the bottles to collect a water sample from the location where the unusual measurements appeared.

5. Give each student or student group a copy of the *CTD Data Collected on Okeanos Explorer Cruise EX1004, Leg 3 Worksheet*. Provide students with the URL of an online seawater density calculator, such as <http://www.es.flinders.edu.au/~mattom/Utilities/density.html>. Be sure students understand how to calculate values for pressure that are to be entered in the online calculator, and why CTD graphs are constructed with depth on the Y-axis with zero at the top of the axis.

When students have completed the worksheet assignment, lead a discussion of their results. Students' graphs should resemble Figures 1 and 2.

The discussion should include the following points:

- Density changed most rapidly near the surface.
- In general, density increases as depth increases.
- As depth increases, temperature and salinity tend to level out, while density continues to increase because pressure continues to increase with increasing depth.
- If an underwater robot is neutrally buoyant, the robot will sink if it enters a water mass that has a lower density.
- If the water mass has a greater density, the robot will rise until it encounters a water mass whose density equals that of the robot.

If students are not familiar with deep-sea chemosynthetic communities, briefly describe the concept of chemosynthesis, and contrast it with photosynthesis. Tell students that chemosynthetic ecosystems in the deep ocean are found where a source of chemical energy is emerging from the ocean floor. If you have decided to use materials referenced in Step 1c, present these now. Tell students that a major objective of the INDEX-SATAL 2010 Expedition was to locate submarine volcanoes, hydrothermal vents, chemosynthetic ecosystems, and seamounts associated with active geologic processes in Indonesia's deep sea.

Ask what kinds of clues might be found in CTD data that could reveal the presence of hydrothermal vents or volcanoes. Increased temperature is fairly obvious, since heat from Earth's core is the energy source that causes vents to form. Temperatures of hydrothermal fluids may be more than 300°C, since the high pressure of deep-sea environments prevents water from boiling. Other clues (not discussed in this lesson) may come from instruments that measure acidity (fluids from hydrothermal vents are often highly acidic), and from chemical analyses of seawater samples (hydrogen sulfide, for example, is often found in hydrothermal vent fluids, but is not normally found in seawater).

In late June, during the INDEX-SATAL 2010 Expedition, CTD data showed temperature anomalies that suggested the possible presence of hydrothermal



vents nearby. On June 30, 2010, *Okeanos Explorer*'s ROV *Little Hercules* visited the site and found an active hydrothermal vent “surrounded by yellow and black molten sulfur, multiple species of hot-vent shrimp, a 10cm scale worm, and a small patch of stalked barnacles. After departing from the vent, the ROV ascended the summit ridge and encountered fields of sulfide chimneys with vast aggregations of stalked barnacles at their base. The chimneys varied in terms of age and venting characteristics. Some chimneys were fairly oxidized and others covered in white sulfide. Some chimneys were venting clear fluid while others were venting black smoke.” You can read more about the site, and see images from *Little Hercules* here: <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/logs/june30/june30.html>.

6. Discussion of CTD technology may also include the following components of technological literacy (ITEA, 2007):
- **Scope of technology** – Development of CTD instrumentation allows many chemical and physical characteristics to be measured in the ocean, some of which could not be measured in deep water before this technology was created.
  - **Core concepts of technology** – A CTD is an example of several technological systems connected together; including different systems to measure various chemical and physical characteristics of seawater, and equipment for collecting water samples from very deep areas in Earth's ocean.
  - **Relationships between technologies and other fields of study** – Improvements to each of the technologies listed above improves the overall capability of water column investigations; and this information is useful to geologists, biologists, and many other branches of science.

### The BRIDGE Connection

[www.vims.edu/bridge/](http://www.vims.edu/bridge/) – Scroll over “Ocean Science Topics” in the menu on the left side of the page, then “Habitats” then select “Deep Ocean” for activities and links about deep-ocean ecosystems.

### The “Me” Connection

Have students write a brief essay describing how density of fluids on Earth affect their own lives. Students may struggle with this initially, depending upon their understanding of what can be included in the term “fluids.” You may need to suggest that this term includes gases as well as liquids, which may help students think in terms of atmospheric fluids (air) and issues concerning the density of these fluids (barometric pressure, which affects weather patterns, storms, etc.).

### Connections to Other Subjects

English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics

### Assessment

Students answers to *Worksheet* questions and class discussions provide opportunities for assessment.

### Extensions

Visit the *Okeanos Explorer* Digital Atlas ([http://www.ncddc.noaa.gov/website/google\\_maps/OkeanosExplorer/mapsOkeanos.htm](http://www.ncddc.noaa.gov/website/google_maps/OkeanosExplorer/mapsOkeanos.htm)) and Web page (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/welcome.html>) for reports, images, and other products from *Okeanos Explorer* cruises.







## Multimedia Discovery Missions

<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/learning/welcome.html> – Click on the links to Lessons 1, 5, and 6 for interactive multimedia presentations and Learning Activities on Plate Tectonics, Chemosynthesis and Hydrothermal Vent Life, and Deep-Sea Benthos.

## Other Relevant Lesson Plans from NOAA's Ocean Exploration Program

### And Now for Something Completely Different...

(from the 2005 GalAPAGos: Where Ridge Meets Hotspot Expedition)

[http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/05galapagos/background/edu/media/05galapagos\\_dfferent.pdf](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/05galapagos/background/edu/media/05galapagos_dfferent.pdf)

Focus: Biological communities at hydrothermal vents (Grades 5-6; Life Science)

Students identify and describe organisms typical of hydrothermal vent communities near the Galapagos Spreading Center, explain why hydrothermal vent communities tend to be short-lived, and identify and discuss lines of evidence which suggested the existence of hydrothermal vents before they were actually discovered.

### A Hydrothermal ADVENTure

(from the INSPIRE: Chile Margin 2010 Expedition)

<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/10chile/background/edu/media/ahydrothermal.pdf>

Focus: Hydrothermal vents (Grades 5-6; Earth Science)

Students explain the overall structure of hydrothermal vents and how they are related to the motion of tectonic plates, and will create a model of a hydrothermal vent.

### The Volcano Factory

(from the 2004 Submarine Ring of Fire expedition)

[http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/04fire/background/edu/media/RoF\\_volcanism.pdf](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/04fire/background/edu/media/RoF_volcanism.pdf)

Focus: Volcanism on the Mariana Arc (Grades 5-6; Earth Science)

Students explain the tectonic processes that result in the formation of the Mariana Arc and the Mariana Trench, and explain why the Mariana Arc is one of the most volcanically-active regions on Earth.

### Unexplored

(from the New Zealand American Submarine Ring of Fire 2005 expedition)

[http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/05fire/background/edu/media/rof05\\_unexplored.pdf](http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/05fire/background/edu/media/rof05_unexplored.pdf)

Focus: Scientific exploration of deep-sea volcanoes (Grades 5-6; Life Science/Physical Science/Earth Science)

Students compare and contrast submarine volcanoes at convergent and divergent plate boundaries, infer the kinds of living organisms that may be found around hydrothermal vents, describe three ways in which scientists may prepare to explore areas that are practically unknown, and explain two types of primary production that may be important to biological communities around hydrothermal vents in the Mariana Arc.



## Living With the Heat

(from the Submarine Ring of Fire 2006 expedition)

<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/06fire/background/edu/media/ROF06.LivingHeat.pdf>

Focus: Hydrothermal vent ecology and transfer of energy among organisms that live near vents (Grades 5-6; Life Science/Earth Science)

Students describe how hydrothermal vents are formed and characterize the physical conditions at these sites, explain what chemosynthesis is and contrast this process with photosynthesis, identify autotrophic bacteria as the basis for food webs in hydrothermal vent communities, and describe common food pathways among organisms typically found in hydrothermal vent communities.

## Other Resources

*The Web links below are provided for informational purposes only. Links outside of Ocean Explorer have been checked at the time of this page's publication, but the linking sites may become outdated or non-operational over time.*

Anonymous. 2010. Web site for the INDEX-SATAL 2010 Expedition [Internet]. Office of Ocean Exploration and Research, NOAA [cited January 7, 2011]. Available from: <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/10index/welcome.html> – Includes links to lesson plans, career connections, and other resources

Anonymous. Ocean Explorer [Internet]. NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research [cited January 4, 2011]. Available from: <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov>.

Anonymous. 2011. *Okeanos Explorer* Education Materials Collection [Internet]. NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research [cited January 4, 2011]. Available from: <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov>

Anonymous. *Okeanos Explorer* America's Ship For Ocean Exploration [Internet]. NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research [cited January 24, 2011]. Available from: [http://explore.noaa.gov/special-projects/indonesia-u-s-scientific-and-technical-cooperation-in-ocean-exploration/files/Okeanos\\_Explorer\\_for\\_WOC\\_-\\_FINAL.pdf](http://explore.noaa.gov/special-projects/indonesia-u-s-scientific-and-technical-cooperation-in-ocean-exploration/files/Okeanos_Explorer_for_WOC_-_FINAL.pdf); NOAA Fact Sheet about *Okeanos Explorer*

Anonymous. CTD and Tow Methods [Internet]. NOAA Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory [cited January 4, 2011]. Available from: <http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/vents/PlumeStudies/WhatsACTD/CTDMethods.html>

International Technology Education Association. 2007. Standards for Technological Literacy: Content for the Study of Technology. Reston, VA. 260 pp.

## National Science Education Standards

### Content Standard A: Science As Inquiry

- Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry
- Understandings about scientific inquiry

### Content Standard B: Physical Science

- Transfer of energy



**Content Standard C: Life Science**

- Populations and ecosystems
- Diversity and adaptations of organisms

**Content Standard D: Earth and Space Science**

- Structure of the Earth system

**Content Standard E: Science and Technology**

- Understandings about science and technology

**Content Standard F: Science in Personal and Social Perspectives**

- Personal health
- Populations, resources, and environments

**Ocean Literacy Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts**

*Because most Fundamental Concepts are broad in scope, some aspects of some Concepts may not be explicitly addressed in this lesson. Such aspects, however, can be easily included at the discretion of the individual educator.*

**Essential Principle 1.****The Earth has one big ocean with many features.**

**Fundamental Concept b.** An ocean basin's size, shape and features (such as islands, trenches, mid-ocean ridges, rift valleys) vary due to the movement of Earth's lithospheric plates. Earth's highest peaks, deepest valleys and flattest vast plains are all in the ocean.

**Essential Principle 5.****The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.**

**Fundamental Concept e.** The ocean is three-dimensional, offering vast living space and diverse habitats from the surface through the water column to the seafloor. Most of the living space on Earth is in the ocean.

**Fundamental Concept g.** There are deep-ocean ecosystems that are independent of energy from sunlight and photosynthetic organisms. Hydrothermal vents, submarine hot springs, and methane cold seeps rely only on chemical energy and chemosynthetic organisms to support life.

**Essential Principle 6.****The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.**

**Fundamental Concept b.** From the ocean we get foods, medicines, and mineral and energy resources. In addition, it provides jobs, supports our nation's economy, serves as a highway for transportation of goods and people, and plays a role in national security.

**Fundamental Concept g.** Everyone is responsible for caring for the ocean. The ocean sustains life on Earth and humans must live in ways that sustain the ocean. Individual and collective actions are needed to effectively manage ocean resources for all.

**Essential Principle 7.****The ocean is largely unexplored.**

**Fundamental Concept a.** The ocean is the last and largest unexplored place on Earth—less than 5% of it has been explored. This is the great frontier for the next generation's explorers and researchers, where they will find great opportunities for inquiry and investigation.



**Fundamental Concept b.** Understanding the ocean is more than a matter of curiosity. Exploration, inquiry and study are required to better understand ocean systems and processes.

**Fundamental Concept c.** Over the last 40 years, use of ocean resources has increased significantly, therefore the future sustainability of ocean resources depends on our understanding of those resources and their potential and limitations.

**Fundamental Concept d.** New technologies, sensors and tools are expanding our ability to explore the ocean. Ocean scientists are relying more and more on satellites, drifters, buoys, subsea observatories and unmanned submersibles.

**Fundamental Concept f.** Ocean exploration is truly interdisciplinary. It requires close collaboration among biologists, chemists, climatologists, computer programmers, engineers, geologists, meteorologists, and physicists, and new ways of thinking.



### Send Us Your Feedback

We value your feedback on this lesson, including how you use it in your formal/informal education settings.

Please send your comments to:  
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### For More Information

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## Student Worksheet

### CTD Data Collected on *Okeanos Explorer* Cruise EX1004, Leg 3

#### CTD Data

Depth (m)	Temperature (°C)	Salinity (psu)*	Density (g/cm <sup>3</sup> )
20	29.5	34.15	_____
40	28.5	34.24	_____
60	28.5	34.25	_____
80	27.0	34.35	_____
100	25.5	34.45	_____
125	24.0	34.60	_____
150	23.5	34.76	_____
175	18.0	34.65	_____
200	16.5	34.60	_____
220	15.0	34.54	_____
320	11.5	34.40	_____
420	10.0	34.46	_____
520	8.0	34.55	_____
620	7.0	34.52	_____
720	6.0	34.53	_____
820	5.5	34.56	_____
920	5.0	34.54	_____
1050	4.5	34.55	_____
1150	4.5	34.56	_____
1250	4.5	34.57	_____
1350	4.0	34.57	_____
1450	4.0	34.58	_____
1550	4.0	34.58	_____
1650	4.0	34.58	_____
1750	4.0	34.58	_____
1800	4.0	34.59	_____

These data are from a CTD cast made aboard the *Okeanos Explorer* on July 24, 2010, as part of the INDEX-SATAL 2010 Expedition.

1. Make a graph of salinity and depth. Put depth on the Y-axis of each graph, and put zero at the TOP of the Y-axis. Oceanographers like to plot CTD data with depth on the y-axis and the greatest depths at the bottom of the plot, since that is the way we usually think about a profile of the water column.
2. Make a graph of temperature and depth, with depth on the Y-axis as in Step 1.
3. Use an online calculator to find the density of seawater at each depth. These calculators require you to enter values of pressure as well as temperature and salinity. Pressure in the ocean (in bars) is nearly equal to the depth in meters divided by 10 (in other words, for every 1 m increase in depth, pressure increases 0.1 bar). Pressure at the ocean surface (depth = 0 m) is equal to 1 bar, so pressure underwater is equal to

$$[(\text{depth in meters}) \div 10] + 1.0$$

4. Where did density change most rapidly?
5. In general, what happens to density as depth increases?
6. How do changes in density with increasing depth differ from changes in temperature and salinity with increasing depth?
7. If an underwater robot is neutrally buoyant (that is, it does not rise or sink in the water column) at a certain depth, what will happen if the robot enters a water mass that has a lower density?
8. What will happen if the water mass has a greater density?

\* Salinity is measured by conductivity (how easily electricity flows through a seawater sample). The software used to process conductivity data from the *Okeanos Explorer*'s CTD converts the conductivity measurement to salinity values in practical salinity units (psu). Before psu was adopted as a standard unit, salinity was measured in parts-per-thousand (abbreviated ppt or ‰), and you still may see references to these units, which are almost the same as psu.