

Title: **Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau**

Author: Jennifer Berne

Illustrator: Eric Puybaret

Themes: Biography, Ocean Preservation, Following Your Dreams, Innovation

Hear the book read aloud here: [Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau](#)

Recommended item for center: **Globe**



★ 3rd Grade Common Core Reading Standard ★

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

I. INTRODUCTION (PREP QUESTIONS)

- Tell students Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau is a biography, a true story written by an author about the life of a real person who somehow made a difference in our world during history. Ask students to infer what the significance of Jacques' contributions to our world might have been, based on the title and the cover of the book. Ask them to predict the significance of *manfish*.

II. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

DURING READING:

- Pp. 1-2: Read; discuss the beauty of the descriptive language such as “silvery beads of breath”, etc., as well as describing the underwater world as an “ocean land”. Ask students how the text pattern contributes to the meaning.

Point out the author's use of **alliteration** (when two or more words begin with the **same sound**): “... *silence of the sea, silvery beads of breath* from a man *deep deep down* in a *strange and shimmering* ocean land of *swaying* plants...”

Ask students if they would or wouldn't like to explore under the sea, and why.

- Pp. 3-4: Read; discuss the character traits of Jacques as a young boy (loved water; curious; always wondering *why*). how Jacques' work as an adult began with his natural interests as a boy, as many adult occupations do. Ask students to share their natural interests and discuss what occupations such interests could lead to in the future.
- Pp. 5-6: Read; discuss the significance of the illustrations, showing Jacques flying with birds as well as fish. Identify more relevant information about Jacques (read a story about a man underwater; tried to breathe with a tube; dreamed that he would someday be able to breathe underwater; dreamed about flying).

Point out the **simile** in the last sentence: “...with his *arms* stretched out **like wings**.” Remind students that a **simile** is an example of figurative language and is a comparison of one thing to another thing using the word **like** or **as**. (*My brother runs like a cheetah; that pillow is soft as a cloud*).

- Pp. 7-8: Read; discuss more character traits about Jacques.
- Pp. 9-10: Read; ask what does this say about Jacques? (driven, patient, curious, etc.).
- Pp. 11-12: Read; ask why Jacques would have joined the French Navy?
- Pp. 13-14: Read; using **cause** → **effect**, have students identify the **effect** (Jacques's life had been changed forever) and the **cause** (goggles had allowed him to finally see the world underwater). Remind students that an **effect** is what **happens** and a **cause** is what **makes** something happen. Point out the difference between the descriptions of the underwater scene compared to the city.

- Pp. 15-16: Read; ask students what the one remaining ability that Jacques needed to realize his dream of becoming a *manfish*? (extended air supply)
- Pp. 17-18: Read; using **cause** → **effect** again, have students identify the **effect** (Jacques invented an aqualung p. 17) and the **cause** (he wanted to become a manfish and needed an air supply).
- Pp. 21 + fold-out: Read; point out examples of descriptive language (if time allows):
 - 1st paragraph: **personification** (when an author makes an object do something only a human can do) “plants *slow-dancing* to the rhythms of the sea”
 - 5th paragraph: **simile** comparison (lips **like** giant tires)
 - 6th paragraph: **simile** comparisons (ghost shrimp look **like** a garden of eyes; flute fish heads **like** horses; flute fish bodies sticking out **like** pencils in a cup).
- Pp. 23-24: Read; ask what was Jacques’ purpose in making films undersea? (to expose everyone to the wonders of the sea)
- Pp. 25-26: Using **cause** → **effect**, have students determine the **effect** (ocean pollution, plants and animals dying) and the **cause** (people dumping garbage and chemicals. Discuss how Jacques’ purpose for making films now changed (to inform and warn people of the damage they were causing)
- Pp. 27-28: Read; ask students who Jacques thought would be the most important care takers of our oceans and our planet? Why are children such as you so important to our world? How does this make you feel, and why?

III. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

POST READING:

- Why was the life and contributions of Jacques Cousteau so important? What lessons do you take away from a biography such as this, and why?

IV. SMALL GROUPS

Globe

- Discuss how Jacques’ work as an adult began with his natural interests as a boy, as many adult occupations do. Ask students to share their natural interests and discuss what occupations such interests could lead to in the future.
- Pp. 3-4: Reread; have students locate France on the globe. Have them find the potential bodies of water that Jacques might have seen when he was a boy.
- Pp. 7-8: Reread; draw students’ attention to the two book titles shown in the illustration: Scaphandres (French for *suits*) and Méditerranée (French for *Mediterranean*). Have students again find the Mediterranean Sea on the globe.