

The author of the poem, Molly Minnow, uses sea creatures to make his point about conservation.

## Read the poem.

- Who's the main character?
- Who are the supporting characters?
- What's the setting?
- What happens, first, second, third?
- What's the message?

Choose an issue in the news. Write a poem that comments on the issue.





## Molly Minnow's Message

## **MOLLY MINNOW** by Thomas M. Tufts

Molly Minnow hatched out upon a coral reef, a wonderland of colors and shapes beyond belief.

There were stingrays - swimming triangles, and boxfish just like squares. The shells were perfect circles, crab rectangles everywhere.

Molly gazed at her new world, remaining very still, for a newborn minnow first must learn the ocean's basic skills.

Her family swam up to her, and told her of the rule: "Before a minnow swims like us, she must go to school."

Her mother introduced her to the teacher, Toothy Tim, schoolmaster of the seven seas, who would teach her how to swim.

The class was called to order. "My lessons will begin; please notice on each side of you a long pectoral fin.

The fin provides you motion. First, you pull it in. Next, you thrust it quickly out, Then do it once again.

To swim even faster wiggle your long tail. Swiftly, swiftly, side to side, this motion we call 'flail.'

On top you have a dorsal fin

To keep you swimming straight. Now, let's give them all a try. That's it! You're doing great."

As Molly told her teacher Tim that swimming was her love, a giant hunk of pointed steel came plunging from above.

"Look out!" Molly bubbled out. There was no time to think; for a sailboat's heavy anchor slammed the coral with a 'clink!'

Molly saved her minnow friends who were filled with disbelief, for the massive two-pronged anchor was tearing up their reef.

"Stop!" The little minnows mouthed as the anchor ate a snack of a thousand years of coral growth and continued its attack.

Molly told the others, "We all can only wish that out of ocean's darkness will swim our friend, Saw--fish."

As her words were floating bubbles, a sawfish swam on by.
"Help us!" cried the minnows.
"OK," was his reply.

"You see, that ugly anchor is ripping up our reef. Please, oh please, just saw the rope with your very sharpened teeth."

The sawfish briskly went to work.

He frayed the anchor line
back and forth and forth and back.

He sliced the sailboat's twine.

In twenty strokes he did it.
He cut it from the boat.
And on its raveled, stringy end, the teacher fixed a note.

"We're sorry about your anchor, but it hurt our coral friend. What took a thousand years to grow, You brought quickly to its end.

Please don't ever anchor here or on any coral reef; all you'll cause is sadness and fill our lives with grief.

Find a mooring buoy or tie up to a dock. Don't ever let your anchor's teeth bite ocean's living rock."

The Captain read the teacher's note and decided he was right.
He raised his sails at sundown, and cruised into the night.

Molly Minnow saved her home. For this they crowned her Queen! She ruled the ocean floor with care, no fish had ever seen.

The minnows all were joyful, as the coral grew and grew. They lived happily ever after, and hope that you do, too!

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