



## EXPERIMENT – INSTRUCTIONS

# What is an Estuary?

In a group, discuss the title of the experiment. Do you know what an estuary is? List ideas on a piece of paper and then share those ideas with the class.

Write the definition of the word **estuary** below or on the board:

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Why are estuaries important?

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Complete the following experiment to demonstrate an estuary.

### Materials

- Large clear container (gallon size)
- Container for mixing salt water (liter size)
- Clear plastic tubing
- 10 drops of food coloring
- 1/2 cup salt

### Procedure

1. Fill the large container  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of tap water. This represents a fresh body of water.
2. Mix the salt and tap water in the liter container. Add the food coloring. This represents a salty body of water (ocean).
3. Slowly siphon the salt solution down the side of the large container keeping the siphon tube near, but not on, the bottom of the container. A salt water solution layer will form on the bottom of the container.
4. Answer the following question: Why does the saltwater from the ocean, flowing up the Chesapeake Bay with the incoming tide, flow along the bottom?

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