



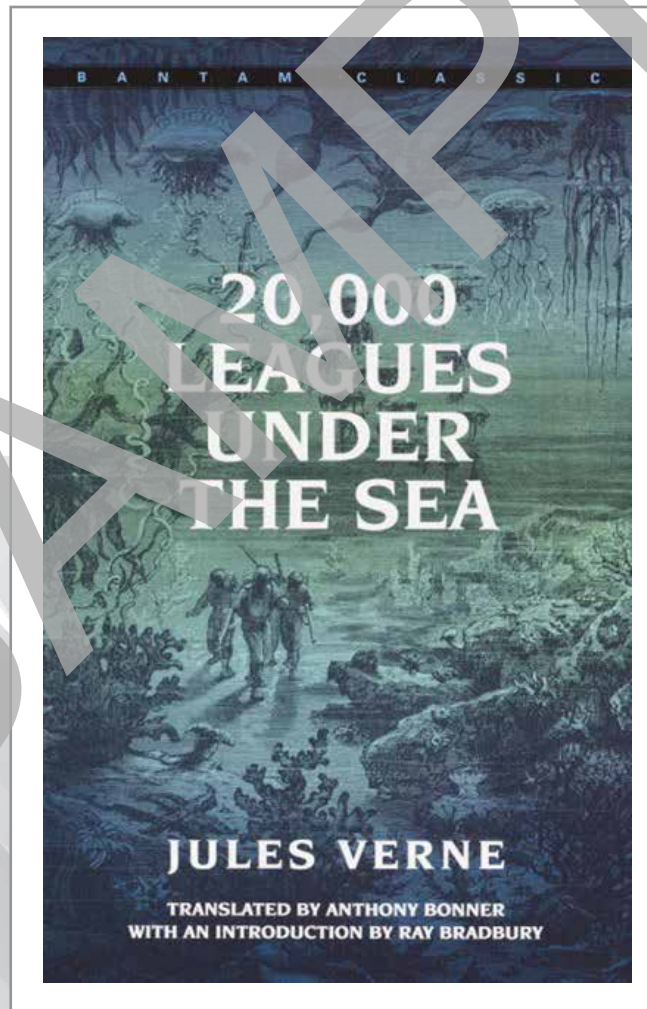
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Sea**

Jules Verne



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Sea

Jules Verne

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Analysis, compare/contrast,  
brainstorm, critical thinking,  
sequence

### Vocabulary

Target words, definitions

### Literary Elements

Characterization, simile,  
metaphor, plot development,  
setting, theme, irony,  
allusion, genre, universality

### Writing

Poetry, characterization,  
essay, epilogue

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral report,  
film viewing

### Comprehension

Cause/effect, prediction

### Across the Curriculum

Music—appropriate  
background music;  
Art—montage, sketch,  
model; Current  
Events—newspaper and  
magazine articles;  
Geography—map

**Genre:** fiction—adventure

**Setting:** oceans and seas of the world; 1866–1867

**Point of View:** first person

**Themes:** adventure, survival, loyalty, friendship, vengeance

**Conflict:** person vs. person; person vs. nature; person vs. self; person vs. society

**Plot:** After becoming captives of Captain Nemo aboard the *Nautilus*, Professor Aronnax and his companions explore marine life while plotting to escape.

**Style:** narrative

**Tone:** adventurous, contemplative

**Date of First Publication:** 1870

## Summary

Professor Aronnax, accompanied by his faithful servant Conseil, embarks on a hazardous mission to rid the seas of a huge monster. After being swept overboard, the two men and Ned Land, a harpooner, are imprisoned aboard a submarine, the *Nautilus*, by Captain Nemo, a genius driven by bitterness and revenge. The three captives encounter incredible adventures during their voyage aboard Nemo's amazing vessel under the world's oceans and seas.

## Characters

**Professor Aronnax:** narrator; intelligent, highly respected Professor of the Paris Museum; adventurous spirit becomes evident as he views the wonderful underwater world he encounters aboard the *Nautilus*

**Captain Nemo:** brilliant, embittered, cynical, vindictive commander of the *Nautilus*; intends to keep Aronnax, Conseil, and Land captives in order to maintain secrecy about his submarine

**Conseil:** Aronnax's loyal, unassertive servant who uncomplainingly accompanies him on all his adventures

**Ned Land:** Canadian; excellent harpooner; ordinarily impassive but becomes disgruntled and spends his time plotting to escape during the long voyage

**Captain Farragut:** commander of the *Abraham Lincoln*, the ship commissioned by the United States government to rid the seas of the monster that has been attacking ships

**Captain Anders:** commander of the *Scotia*

**Crew of the *Nautilus*:** unnamed outcasts from different countries of the world; completely loyal to Captain Nemo

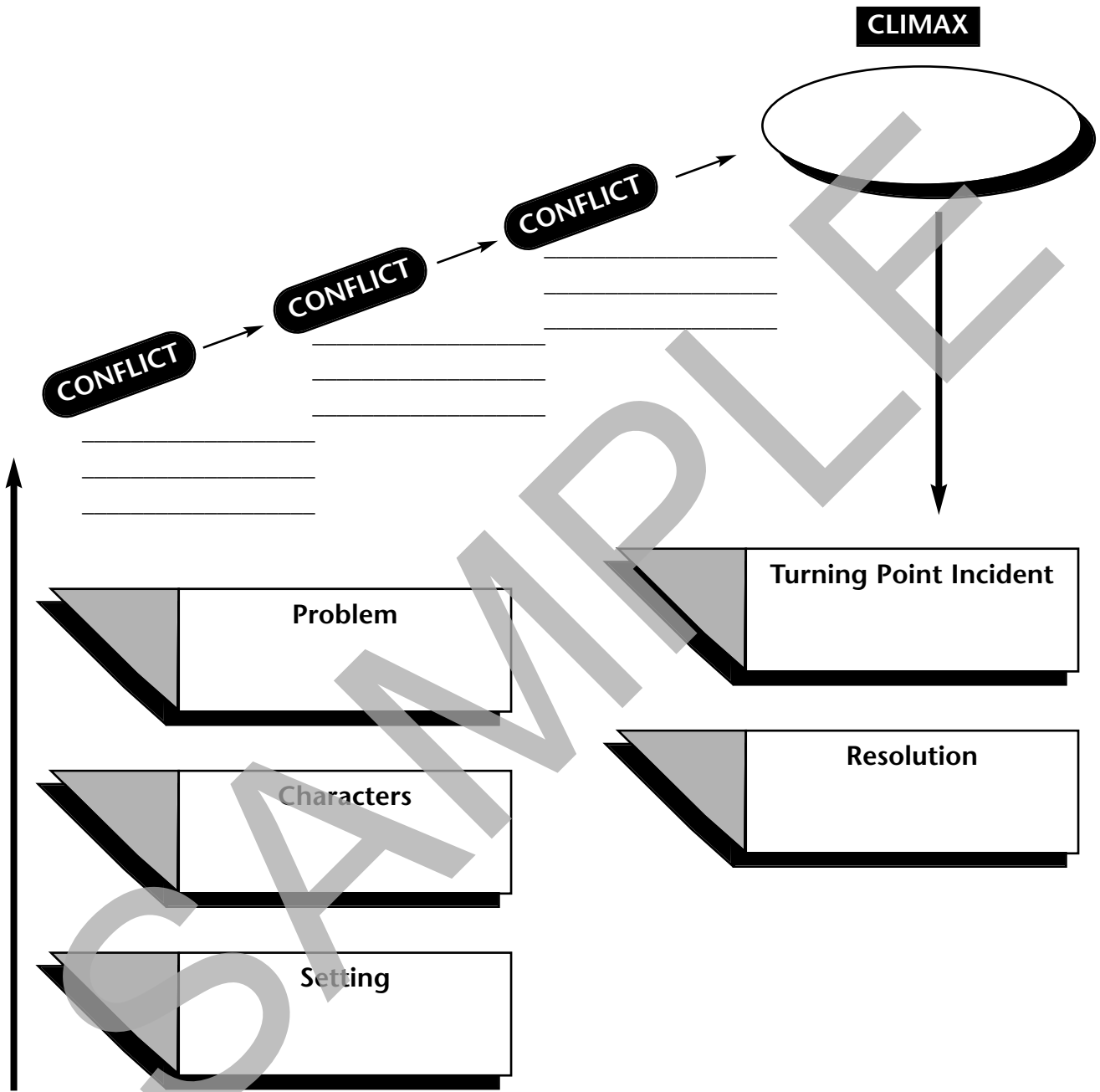
## About the Author

Jules Verne was born February 8, 1828, in Nantes, France. In 1847, he began studying law in Paris, but his passion for writing superceded his desire to practice law. He began to write plays and opera lyrics in 1848 and had his first play published in 1850. His first novel, *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, was published in 1863 and foreshadowed his success as an author of fantasy, adventure, and science. Other major works include *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), *From the Earth to the Moon* (1866), *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873), *Mysterious Island* (1874), and *Master of the World* (1904). In addition to writing fantasy and adventure stories, he wrote several historical novels, including *North Against South* (1887). His works include sixty-five novels, thirty plays, several short stories and essays, and some opera librettos and geographical works. Regarded as the “Father of Science Fiction,” Verne’s writing takes his readers over, above, and beneath the earth. He envisioned and wrote about scientific achievements of the twentieth century, including airplanes, submarines, rocket ships, satellites, guided missiles, and the development of radio, motion pictures, and television. In 1857 Verne married Honorine Morel, a young widow with two daughters. Verne’s only biological child, Michel, was born in 1861. Jules Verne died in 1905.

## Background Information

1. Movies: Several movie versions of the book have been produced. Some distort the story considerably. An excellent silent version was produced in 1916 and has been newly obtained from an archive print. The most well-known was produced by Disney in 1954: 127 min.; directed by Richard Fleisher; stars James Mason as Nemo, Paul Lucas as Aronnax, Peter Lorre as Conseil, and Kirk Douglas as Ned Land; won Oscars for Art Direction and Special Effects. Additional information about movie versions can be found online.
2. Verne named his imaginary submarine the *Nautilus* after Robert Fulton’s invention of a diving boat (1801) that could descend twenty-five feet underwater. In 1886 two Englishmen built the first all-electric submarine and named it *Nautilus* in honor of Verne’s vessel. In 1954, the United States Navy launched the first nuclear-powered submarine, the *Nautilus*. This vessel broke all previous submarine records for underwater speed and endurance and in 1958 became the first submarine to sail under the ice at the North Pole. After traveling almost half a million miles over a span of twenty-five years, the vessel was decommissioned in 1980. The submarine was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1982 and is on public exhibit in Groton, Connecticut.
3. Prepare an overhead transparency to introduce the following terms. (a) league: a measure of distance equaling about 3 geographical miles, 3.452 statute miles, or 4.8280 kilometers (b) fathom: unit of measure, equal to 6 feet, used to measure the depth of water (c) nautical mile: the standard unit of distance in nautical measure, 6,076.11549 feet (d) knot: measure of speed for ships, one nautical mile per hour; i.e., A ship with 20-knot speed can go 20 nautical miles an hour.
4. Sea creatures mentioned in the book—1. cetacean (p. 9): any one of an order of marine animals characterized by fishlike, almost hairless bodies, flat, notched tails and paddle-shaped forelimbs, e.g., whales, dolphins, porpoises 2. narwhal (p. 15): toothed whale of the arctic seas; male has a long, slender, twisted tusk from 6 to 10 feet long that extends forward 3. squid (p. 23): sea animal like an octopus, having 10 arms instead of 8 and a pair of tail fins 4. whale (p. 26): mammal shaped like a huge fish, with a broad, flat tail, flippers, and no hind limbs 5. sea-spider (p. 85): any one of a group of spider-like marine arthropods

# Story Map



## Chapters 7–8, pp. 181–200

Nemo and Aronnax explore the ocean depths at night. Land becomes increasingly persistent about escaping. Nemo refuses to allow Land to hurt a pod of whales they encounter, but Nemo uses the *Nautilus* to massacre several cachalots that are pursuing the pod of whales.

### Vocabulary

viscous (184)  
effluence (184)  
conflagration (184)  
irradiation (186)  
petrified (186)  
titanic (186)  
cataclysms (186)  
capricious (190)  
perpetual (192)  
tacit (192)  
carnage (198)

### Discussion Questions

1. Examine details about Nemo and Aronnax’s night excursion on the bottom of the sea. Brainstorm what you have heard about Atlantis, a mythical, lost continent. *(The waters are in complete darkness, but a reddish point in the distance dimly lights their way. The men walk across a vast plain with rocks and furrows as they draw closer to the light. They climb the first slopes of a mountain covered with mineralized trees and rocks. The immense number of fish and other sea creatures intrigues Aronnax. After an intense climb, the men reach the summit of the mountain, and Aronnax realizes it is a volcano. Lying beneath it are the ruins of an ancient continent Nemo identifies as Atlantis. [Note: Atlantis is a legendary continent thought to have sunk into the Atlantic due to an earthquake.] They remain at the site for an hour. Its beauty overwhelms Aronnax, and Nemo remains motionless with awe. pp. 181–188, 190–191)*
2. Discuss the reasons for Ned Land’s apprehension. *(All hopes of the Nautilus returning to European seas vanish as the submarine remains in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean for almost three weeks, and Aronnax believes Nemo will then head into the South Pacific. With no islands in the area, escape by leaving the vessel is impossible. Land’s prolonged imprisonment causes him to become increasingly silent, angry and resentful. pp. 191–194)*
3. Analyze Conseil’s summation of Ned Land, beginning with “That poor Ned thinks of everything he cannot have. Everything in his past life comes back to him. Everything we are forbidden seems to him regrettable.” *(Responses will vary. p. 195)*
4. Discuss the event that causes Ned to recall his days as a harpooner and the ensuing pursuit. Is Nemo fair in his response and actions? *(The Nautilus encounters a pod of at least twenty whales. Nemo refuses Land’s request to allow the vessel to pursue the whales because it would only be for the pleasure of killing. When a troop of cachalots begins to pursue the whales, however, the captain determines to exterminate them. Using the steel spur on the prow of the Nautilus as a harpoon, Nemo attacks and destroys most of the cachalots, and the others flee. Land becomes enthusiastic as he watches the carnage but later says it was butchery. Nemo reminds him that they have massacred mischievous animals that would have killed the whales. pp. 195–199)*
5. **Prediction:** What will be the result of Ned Land’s ill will toward Captain Nemo?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Research: Have students research and bring to class information and pictures of one of the following: (a) underground volcanoes (b) the legend of the lost continent of Atlantis (c) whales and their predators. They will then participate in a class discussion.
2. Literary Devices: **Similes**—“fish rose...like birds” (p. 186) “apparatus rose like a balloon” (p. 190); **Metaphors**—ocean: Nemo’s banker (p. 181) ocean: sea of blood (p. 199); **Allusion**—Homer (p. 198)