

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Main Idea

Read the short story and answer each question.



Coral Reefs — The Ocean's Neighborhoods

Coral reefs may look like colorful rocks, but they are actually made by tiny animals called polyps. These creatures build strong structures underwater—and those structures become home to thousands of sea animals.

The main job of coral reefs is to provide shelter. Fish, sea turtles, crabs, and shrimp all live inside and around coral. The many cracks and shapes give animals places to hide from predators. Some fish even change colors to blend in with the coral.

Coral reefs also help animals find food. Algae grow on the coral and provide energy for many sea creatures. Some fish nibble at the coral, while others eat the animals that live near it.

Another way coral reefs help is by breaking ocean waves before they reach the shore. This protects beaches from strong storms and keeps the water near land calm and safe.

Coral reefs are sometimes called "rainforests of the sea" because they are full of life. But they are also fragile. Pollution and rising temperatures can damage them. When coral dies, the animals that live there must find new homes—or they might not survive.



Name: _____

Coral Reefs — The Ocean's Neighborhoods

1. What is the main idea of the text?

- A. Coral reefs are colorful and fun to look at
- B. Coral reefs are important because they help protect many ocean animals
- C. Coral reefs are good places to swim
- D. Coral reefs are dangerous for fish to live near

2. Which of these is a detail that supports the main idea?

- A. Coral reefs break waves and protect the shore
- B. Fish only come out at night
- C. Sharks live far away from coral
- D. Coral reefs are made of sand

3. Fill in the blank:

Coral reefs give animals _____ from predators and help many sea creatures survive.

4. List two ways coral reefs help sea animals. Use details from the passage to support your answer.

5. Summarize the passage in 2-3 sentences using your own words.



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: P

Lexile Level: 645L-795L

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Informational Nonfiction - Ocean Science

Introducing the Text

“Today we’ll read about coral reefs and why they are such an important part of the ocean. We’ll focus on identifying the main idea of the passage and picking out the details that support it. At the end, we’ll practice summarizing the text in our own words.”

Vocabulary: coral, polyps, shelter, algae, protect

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you already know about coral reefs or ocean life?
 2. Have you ever heard coral reefs called “rainforests of the sea”? What do you think that means?
 3. Why do animals need places to hide in the ocean?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What are polyps, and what do they do?
 2. How do coral reefs help sea animals find food?
 3. What happens when coral dies?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
 2. Which details helped you understand why coral reefs are important?
 3. Can you summarize what the author wants you to know about coral reefs?
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Activity Idea

Give students large paper or a digital slide to create a diagram showing how coral reefs help sea animals. Have them include at least three labeled parts: shelter, food, and wave protection. Then have students explain in writing or aloud how these parts support the main idea of the passage.

