

Name: _____

Coral Reef: The Ocean's Coolest Neighborhood

By Lydia Lukidis

There might not be anything cooler in the whole ocean than a coral reef! In fact, coral reefs are actually some of the most fascinating living communities on Earth.

Did you ever wonder how a coral reef forms? Tiny animals called coral polyps are responsible for the formation of coral reefs. The coral polyps attach to rocks or other hard surfaces and continue to grow throughout their lifespan.



When they die, they harden. Then new coral polyps grow on



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A reef is a shallow underwater area, made of coral. Many fish and sea animals live in and around reefs.

wide variety of animals live in coral reefs. Some animals live on the actual reef, like starfish, snails, and clams. Other species swim around the reef, like fish and sharks.

There are three types of coral reefs. Fringing reefs form along a coastline. Barrier reefs grow a bit farther from the land. They form parallel to the shore, separated from it by a deep channel of water. Finally, coral atolls are coral reefs that encircle a lagoon.

Coral reefs exist all around the world. The biggest one is called the Great Barrier Reef. The Great Barrier Reef is located off the northeast coast of Australia. It is very long, stretching out for 2,300 kilometers. It can even be seen from outer space! Every year, the beautiful Great Barrier Reef attracts many scuba divers and tourists, about 2 million visitors per year.



Coral reefs are rainbows of color. Coral polyps can be orange, pink, blue, green, red, or almost any color imaginable.

Coral reefs are a vital part of our planet. First of all, they are a home for many animals. They also protect shorelines

against storms and floods. They can even provide us with the natural resources we need to



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generations to come!

About the Author



Lydia Lukidis is a published children's author with a multi-disciplinary background that spans the fields of literature, theater, and puppetry.

Lydia's picture book, *Gerbs in the House: The Dilly Dally Bedtime Routine*, is now available. Find out if Mocha will ever get his silly son to sleep!

Lukidis, Lydia. *Gerbs in the House: The Dilly Dally Bedtime Routine* ISBN: 978-0-9917402-7-7

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1. Describe the rate at which coral reefs grow. Use information from the article to support your answer.

2. Why are coral reefs found mostly in shallow water?



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3. Based on the information in the article, provide a short definition of each of the three types of coral reefs.

Fringing Reef: _____

Barrier Reef: _____

Coral Atoll: _____

4. Circle the two **hemispheres** that the Great Barrier Reef is located within.

Northern

Southern

Eastern

Western

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

_____ 1. variety

a. to form a circle around

_____ 2. tourists

b. extremely important or necessary



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_____ 3. pollution

e. a long passage of water

_____ 6. vital

f. people who visit or travel to a place for pleasure

_____ 7. miniscule

g. a pool of salt water separated from the ocean by a coral reef

_____ 8. channel

h. the act of being formed or developed

_____ 9. predict

i. the presence of harmful substances in the environment

_____ 10. lagoon

j. a number of different things

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In the article, "Cool Coral Reefs," you learned that coral reefs are very important for the well-being of our planet.

On the lines below, describe some of the ways that coral reefs benefit the environment. Then describe what you think might happen if all the coral reefs of the world disappear from damage and pollution. Finally, give one suggestion for protecting the coral reefs.



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ANSWER KEY

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1. Describe the rate at which coral reefs grow. Use information from the article to support your answer.

Coral reefs grow extremely slowly, at a rate of approximately 1 to 2 cm per year.

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