



Name _____

Date _____

THE CORAL REEF

A coral reef is a beautiful underwater community filled with many different types of species. You can find fish, coral, sea plants, and much more. These coral reefs have been around for millions and millions of years. Recently, some scientists believe that coral reefs may be in danger. Scientists believe that pollution and human error has destroyed more than a quarter of the world's coral reefs.

Some of the living animals that make up the coral reefs are struggling to survive. For example, coral looks and feels like rock. This causes people to treat coral like rocks. But coral is actually made up of tiny, clear animals. These animals are called coral polyps. The coral stick together to form large colonies. When the coral polyps die, they leave a hard shell of limestone behind. Coral gets its color from tiny sea plants called algae. There is a delicate balance between the algae and the coral. Coral reefs provide homes and shelter for many sea animals and plants.

Pollution and bad fishing practices have caused harm to the coral and algae. Another problem is the warming of the water. The algae cannot live in warmer waters and therefore, the coral loses its source of food and color. This process has been named coral bleaching.

Scientists are working hard to find solutions to the problems in coral reefs. Their goal is to protect and preserve this natural resource.

STORY QUESTIONS

- What is coral made up of?
 - sea anemone
 - tiny, clear animals
 - seaweed and moss
 - rocks and crevices
- When coral reefs die, they leave a hard shell of . . .
 - calcium.
 - helium.
 - carbon dioxide
 - limestone.
- What does the word *error* mean as used in the passage?
 - extraordinary
 - fault
 - inhibited
 - progressive
- What is the main idea of this reading passage?
 - to inform the reader about the coral reefs and their uniqueness
 - to inform the reader about how coral bleaching occurs
 - to explain the difference between the two different types of corals
 - to explain the life of marine biologists