

WORKSHEET 2: CORALS AND ZOOXANTHELLAE ARE FRIENDS

Facts About Coral

With your teacher and fellow classmates, read the following facts about coral. Choose at least one fact that you personally find especially interesting and would like to share with others. Place a symbol (heart, exclamation point, star, etc.) next to that fact.

1. Millions of tiny creatures called coral polyps attach themselves to each other on a rock base and grow to make a large, solid coral. It is called stony coral.
2. Some coral looks like seaweed and undulates (sways back and forth) in the water. It is called soft coral.
3. Zooxanthellae are tiny algae. They attach to the coral and make it look colorful.
4. The coral polyps and the zooxanthellae need each other to survive.
5. The coral gets substances from the zooxanthellae that help it make food.
6. The zooxanthellae get protection from the coral, and materials to help with photosynthesis.
7. Many corals make up a coral reef. The reef provides food and homes for lots of other sea creatures.
8. When ocean water gets too hot, the coral polyps are stressed and may reject the zooxanthellae. The coral turns white.
9. When coral turns white it is called bleaching. At this point the coral does not have food anymore, and it may die.
10. If all the coral in the reef is bleached, other animals that live there may die, too.

Draw to Learn!

From the pictures provided by your teacher, choose a picture of a coral polyp and draw one on the back of this sheet.

Find a picture of a zooxanthellae and draw one on the back of this sheet.

Make sure to label both of your drawings.