

Reef Word Race Answer Key

Keyword Locations

Beneath the waves of warm **oceans**, vast **coral reefs** form like underwater cities filled with life. Each **coral** structure is built by tiny creatures called **polyps**, which join together to create limestone skeletons. Over time, these skeletons build enormous **reef** systems that stretch for miles.

These lively habitats attract thousands of **fish**, crabs, and sea turtles seeking food and shelter. The bright and **colorful** patterns you see on corals come from tiny algae that live inside them, helping the **polyps** grow by using **sunlight** to produce energy. This special teamwork makes the **reef** a balanced **ecosystem**, where every organism plays a part.

However, when the **ocean** water gets too warm, the algae leave the corals. This causes **bleaching**, turning the **reefs** white and fragile. Without their rich colors and healthy algae, the **reefs** struggle to survive, putting the entire **habitat** at risk. Protecting **coral reefs** means protecting the future of marine life.

Teacher Notes / Guide

Purpose: This activity trains students to **visually scan for information** rather than read word-by-word. It strengthens their ability to quickly locate **keywords** in informational text, a vital skill for test-taking, research, and real-world reading efficiency.

Implementation Tips:

- Display a timer and give students **two minutes** to find and circle all ten words.
- Encourage students to **look for capital letters, prefixes, and word shapes** rather than sounding out words.
- Afterward, students can pair up to compare circled words and check accuracy using the answer key.
- Finish with a group reread for **smooth pacing and expression**, turning this scanning task into a fluency-building opportunity.

Extension Idea: Integrate comprehension by asking, "What happens to reefs when bleaching occurs?" to connect fluency with understanding.