

## Coral Reefs

### American Spaces Student Worksheet by the Smithsonian Ocean Portal



Coral reefs are the most diverse of all marine ecosystems. They teem with life, with perhaps one quarter of all ocean species depending on reefs for food and shelter. Because they are so diverse, coral reefs are often called the rainforests of the sea. Coral reefs are also very important to people, providing food, protection of shorelines, jobs based on tourism, and even medicines.

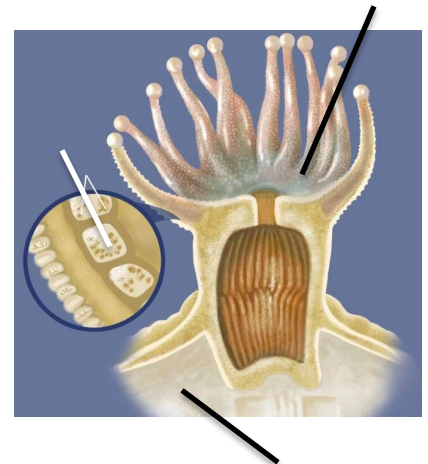
#### **Objectives:**

- Understand that coral reefs are most diverse ocean ecosystem
- Understand what corals and coral reefs are
- Explain how other ocean animals rely on coral reefs

Read as far as you can through the Corals and Coral Reefs topic page (<http://ocean.si.edu/corals-and-coral-reefs>). Write down answers individually or in small groups, and then go over the following questions as a group.

1. Are corals animals, vegetables, or minerals?

2. Label the parts of a coral on the diagram to the right.



3. What is the difference between a coral animal and a coral reef?

4. Where are coral reefs found?

5. How do coral reefs help people?

6. List three threats to coral reefs.

7. What can you do to protect coral reefs?

Vocabulary scavenger hunt:

1. Define "polyp"

2. Define "coral bleaching"

3. Define "sexual reproduction" and "asexual reproduction." What is the difference?

### **Additional Reading and Media**

Bizarre and Beautiful Coral Reef Animals slideshow:

<http://ocean.si.edu/slideshow/bizarre-and-beautiful-coral-reef-animals>

Video about connecting coral reef protected areas: [http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-](http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-videos/connecting-coral-reefs)

[videos/connecting-coral-reefs](http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-videos/connecting-coral-reefs)

Article about Australia's Great Barrier Reef: <http://ocean.si.edu/blog/great-barrier-reef-going-going-gone>

Slideshow showing two views of coral reefs: <http://ocean.si.edu/slideshow/two-views-coral-reefs-thriving-and-threatened>

Article on marine protected areas and coral reefs: <http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-news/having-your-fish-and-eating-them-too>

ID life growing on an artificial reef: <http://qrius.si.edu/do/part/identification-challenge>