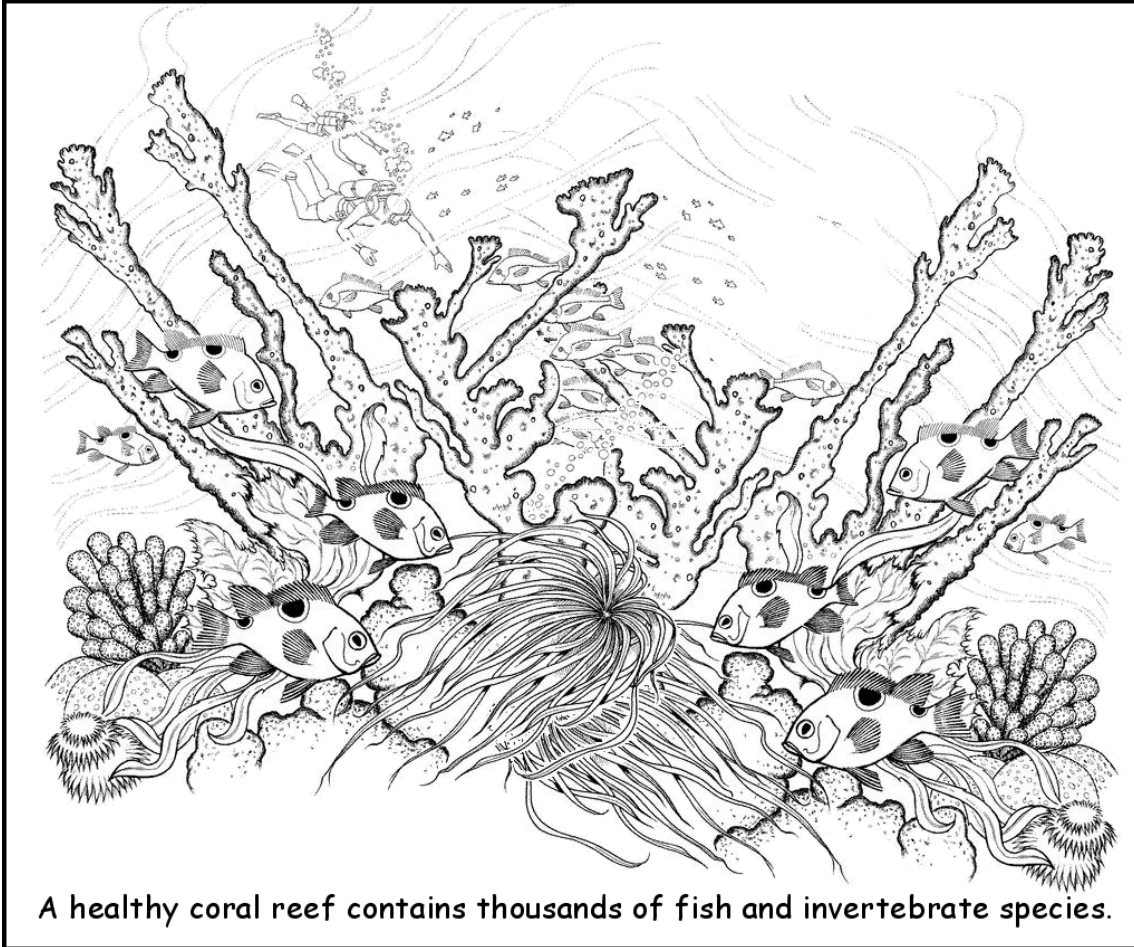


An author will often give you a clue about their writing by providing captioned pictures and section headings. Reviewing the captions and headings before you begin reading may help you more fully understand the material being read.

Look at the picture and read the caption.



What do you think you might learn from reading this article?

Read only the headings on the next page then answer the questions below.

★ What do you think the first section will tell you?

★ What do you think you'll learn when you read the second section?

Corals and Coral Reefs

Coral reefs are some of the most diverse ecosystems in the world. Almost all corals are composed of hundreds to many thousands of individual animals called polyps. Corals live in warm, tropical waters as well as deep, cold waters.

Importance of Coral Reefs

Coral reefs are important in many ways. Medicines are being developed from coral reef animals and plants. The reefs contribute to local economies through tourism and commercial fishing operations. Coral reefs buffer adjacent shorelines against erosion and property damage. Coral reefs also help protect wetlands along the coast.

Natural Threats to Coral Reef

Weather-related damage to coral reefs frequently occurs. Powerful waves from hurricanes and cyclones can break apart or flatten large coral heads. It is rare that a single storm will kill off an entire colony, but slow-growing corals may be overgrown by algae before they can recover. Reefs also are threatened by long periods of exceptionally low tides that leave shallow water coral heads exposed, damaging the reefs. Corals exposed to daylight are vulnerable to damage from ultraviolet radiation, which can overheat and dry out the coral's tissues. In addition to weather, corals are vulnerable to natural predators. Fish, marine worms, barnacles, crabs, snails and sea stars all prey on the soft inner tissues of coral polyps. If coral reefs are subjected to long-term weather and predator damage, they may not survive.

Answer the questions.

1. List two natural threats that are mentioned in this article?

A.) _____ B.) _____

2. List two ways in which coral reefs benefit people.

A.) _____ B.) _____

3. Can corals live in cold, dark water? (circle one) Yes No

Answers may vary.

Answer the questions.

List two natural threats that are mentioned in this article?

A.) algae B.) various marine life

List two ways in which coral reefs benefit people.

A.) possible source of new medicines B.) preventing erosion

Can corals live in cold, dark water? (circle one)

Yes

No