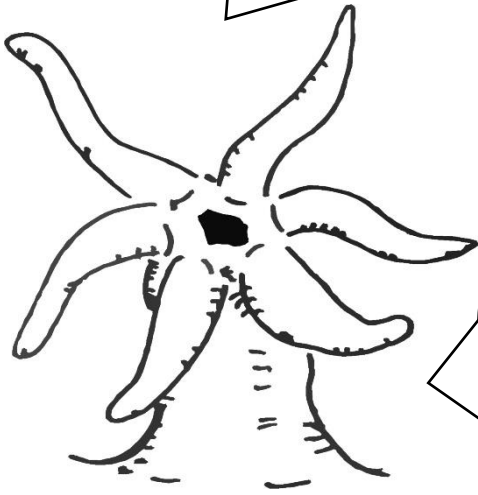


name:

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Who am I?

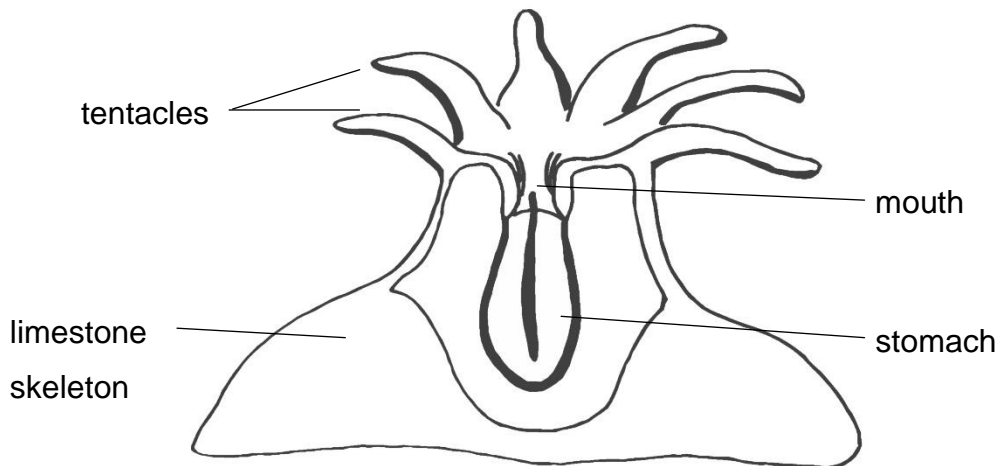
Hello, I am a coral. There are many different species of us all over the world. I am a stony coral. Take a closer look at me! Make a guess! Do you think I am an animal or a plant?



Exactly, scientists say that I am an animal, although I do not have any legs, arms or a face. I cannot move, but I look very pretty anyway!



Now you can take a closer look at me:

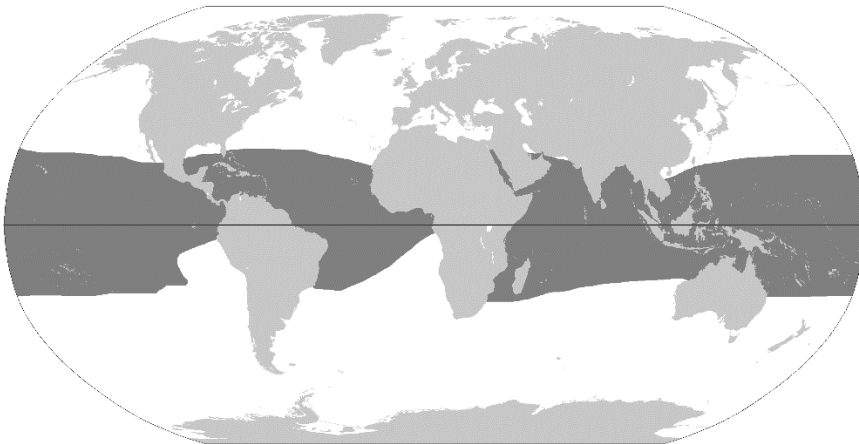
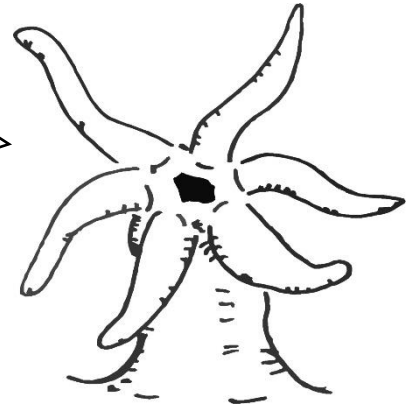


name:

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Where do I live?

I live with a lot of other corals in the ocean. There it is usually at least 20 degrees Celsius because I do not like the cold. On the picture below you can see a world map. The areas marked black that are close to the equator are places where I like to be.



equator

(o.A., o.J.)

I live with a lot of different corals in a colony. When we are hungry, we eat very small animals and plants, which are called plankton.

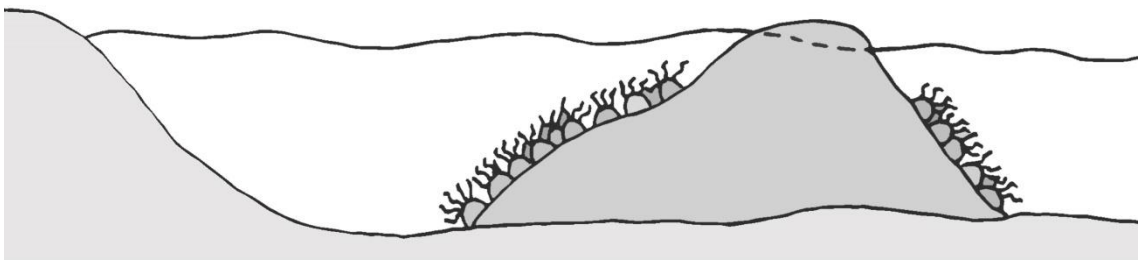
Also, I live in shallow water close to the coast because my roommate needs the sunlight to survive. My roommate is an alga. We always help each other, because we live in a mutual symbiosis.

name:

date:

What is a coral reef?

Do you wonder how I can become a coral reef? I have room for many different animals to live. Now I will let you know how that works!



Imagine the reef as a big hill on the sea bottom. The hill can rise above the water surface.



But how are the corals involved in this?

The profile of the coral shows that it has a limestone skeleton. When the corals die, only the limestone skeleton remains. New corals grow on the remaining limestone so that a hill develops. That way a coral reef is built on which many other animals can live. But that development takes a very long time.

name:

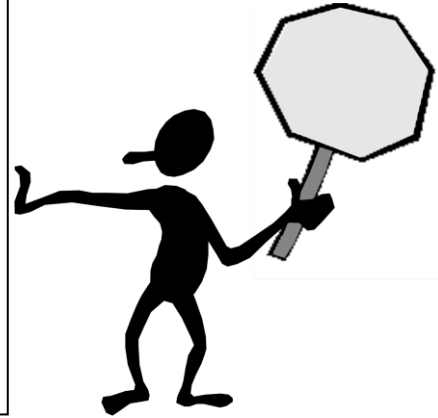
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Coral reefs in danger

Why are coral reefs so important?

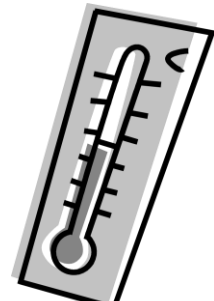
Coral reefs only exist in small areas of the ocean. However, the coral reefs have room for a quarter of all the marine animals. That is a lot of animals! For example, 5000 different fishes can live on a coral reef.

Many young fishes grow up in secure places on the coral reef. So, coral reefs are important biotopes for many different animals and plants. That's why it is so important to save the coral reefs.



However, many coral reefs are in danger. Now I will explain some of the reasons to you:

Climate change can be seen as the biggest threat to the coral reefs. If the water gets too warm, the corals suffer stress. As a result, the corals reject the algae. Then they no longer have the support they need and they starve.



Water pollution is very dangerous for the coral reefs as well. This can happen, for example, if there is a shipping accident and oil leaks into the water. Another reason for pollution is the wastewater from hotels, which are located in coastal areas.

Fisheries are another danger for coral reefs because many fishes are often caught on the reef. This process destroys the biotope of the animals and plants. As a result, many species leave the coral reefs.

