Reef Word Detectives

Use nearby words to unlock precise meanings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.4a "Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the context clues that help you figure out the meanings of meticulous, secure, decline, and resilient. Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 beside each clue to match the word in the questions.

Rebuilding a Coral Reef

(1) Along a Florida reef, divers fasten small pieces of living coral to underwater frames called nurseries. The frames hold the coral above the sandy bottom, where it can receive sunlight and water flow. After several months, the fragments grow branches. Scientists then transplant, or move, the stronger pieces onto damaged parts of the reef. This work does not replace every lost coral colony, but it can help a reef begin to recover after storms, disease, or unusually warm water.

(2) Restoring a reef is a meticulous process, meaning it requires careful attention to small details. Before divers attach a coral fragment, they inspect it for pale spots or broken tissue. They also choose a stable place on the reef, because a loose fragment may tumble in waves. Divers use epoxy, a thick glue that hardens underwater, to secure the coral. A fragment that survives in its new location may later reproduce, adding young corals to the area.

(3) Reef teams also monitor their work over time. During each visit, they count living corals and photograph the same reef sections. The records help them detect changes that might be hard to notice on a single dive. For example, a sudden decline, or drop, in living coral could signal trouble from heat, pollution, or disease. If a nursery contains resilient coral, coral able to survive difficult conditions, researchers may use some of its fragments in future projects. Their observations guide decisions about where restoration efforts are most needed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 2, what does meticulous mean? Which nearby words help you infer its meaning?

2. In paragraph 2, secure comes after the word to, so it names an action. Does secure mean "fasten firmly" or "protect from danger"? Which words support your choice?

3. In paragraph 3, what does decline mean? What words in the sentence confirm the meaning?

4. What does resilient mean in paragraph 3? Use the words after resilient to explain your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a science-related word. Write two sentences that use your word and include at least two context clues that show what it means without giving a dictionary-style definition.

ANSWER KEY

Reef Word Detectives

GRADE 6 · L.6.4a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the context clues that help you figure out the meanings of meticulous, secure, decline, and resilient. Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 beside each clue to match the word in the questions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 2, what does meticulous mean? Which nearby words help you infer its meaning?	**Meticulous means very careful and exact. The clue is "requires careful attention to small details."**
2	In paragraph 2, secure comes after the word to, so it names an action. Does secure mean "fasten firmly" or "protect from danger"? Which words support your choice?	**Secure means fasten firmly. The clue is that divers use epoxy, "a thick glue that hardens underwater," to secure the coral.**
3	In paragraph 3, what does decline mean? What words in the sentence confirm the meaning?	**Decline means a decrease. The confirming words are "or drop."**
4	What does resilient mean in paragraph 3? Use the words after resilient to explain your answer.	**Resilient means able to survive difficult conditions. The passage says "coral able to survive difficult conditions."**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Maya slid a soilglower beneath the seed tray before the experiment. The thin electric mat warmed the cold soil and helped the seeds sprout.

Accept equivalent meanings when the student identifies accurate context clues from the passage. For Part 3, accept any invented word used in two sentences with at least two clear clues to its meaning and no dictionary-style definition.