# Reef Clue Hunt

Use nearby details to uncover word meanings.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4a** "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 four words or phrases whose meanings are explained or strongly suggested by nearby context. Circle the clue words or phrases that helped you infer each meaning.

### A Reef After the Storm

1 At dawn, marine biologist Lena Ortiz lowered a small sensor into a coral reef lagoon near Belize. The water looked clear, but the instrument measured an opaque layer of muddy runoff below the surface. Opaque water does not let much light pass through it, so the algae living inside corals could not make as much food. Ortiz recorded the depth, temperature, and cloudiness every hour. Her notes would help the team determine whether a recent storm had changed the reef's conditions.

2 During the next week, the researchers compared photographs taken before and after the storm. In several places, the coral had become pale, a sign that its algae had left or stopped producing enough food. This response was temporary in some colonies, which proved resilient, or able to recover after difficulty. Other colonies remained damaged because sediment had settled on them. The team did not assume that every pale patch would die. Instead, they returned each day to observe whether color and feeding activity began to increase.

3 To test their explanation, Ortiz's group placed clean ceramic tiles at different depths in the lagoon. The tiles acted as stand-ins for hard reef surfaces, collecting the same particles that might cover coral. After three days, shallow tiles held little sediment, while deeper tiles were coated. This pattern corroborated the sensor readings, meaning it supplied supporting evidence for them. The scientists proposed planting mangroves along nearby shorelines. Mangrove roots can trap soil before it reaches the sea, which may diminish, or reduce, future runoff.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does opaque mean in paragraph 1? Which words give you the clue?

2. What does resilient mean in paragraph 2? Use a nearby phrase to support your answer.

3. In paragraph 3, what does corroborated mean? What does the sentence tell you that the pattern did?

4. Why does diminish mean reduce in the final sentence? Explain how the rest of the sentence helps you infer its meaning.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about a real place or science topic. Include one unfamiliar word and at least two context clues that reveal what the word means.

**ANSWER KEY**

# Reef Clue Hunt

**GRADE 8 · L.8.4a**

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words or phrases whose meanings are explained or strongly suggested by nearby context. Circle the clue words or phrases that helped you infer each meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What does opaque mean in paragraph 1? Which words give you the clue? | **Opaque means not letting much light pass through. The clue is, "does not let much light pass through it."** |
| 2 | What does resilient mean in paragraph 2? Use a nearby phrase to support your answer. | **Resilient means able to recover after difficulty. The passage directly gives the clue, "able to recover after difficulty."** |
| 3 | In paragraph 3, what does corroborated mean? What does the sentence tell you that the pattern did? | **Corroborated means supported or confirmed. The pattern supplied supporting evidence for the sensor readings.** |
| 4 | Why does diminish mean reduce in the final sentence? Explain how the rest of the sentence helps you infer its meaning. | **Mangrove roots trap soil before it reaches the sea, so they can reduce future runoff.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the community garden, the soil was porous, so rainwater soaked through it instead of pooling on top. The tiny spaces between soil particles let water enter quickly, helping the roots avoid standing in water.

Accept reasonable paraphrases of the four target words when students connect each meaning to nearby context. For the open task, accept any accurate two-sentence response with an unfamiliar word and at least two meaningful context clues.