Reef Word Detectives

Use word parts and context to unlock meaning.

ELA.3.V.1.2 "Identify and apply knowledge of common Greek and Latin roots, base words, and affixes to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in grade-level content."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle a word part, such as a beginning, base, or ending, in each paragraph. Number 1, 2, and 3 beside the three words you use to figure out their meanings from nearby clues.

Life on a Coral Reef

1. A coral reef is a busy ocean home. Tiny coral animals build hard homes near the surface. Colorful fish hide among the branches. Microscopic algae live inside many corals and help make food from sunlight. The algae are too small to see without a microscope, but they are important partners. Together, they support the reef community each day.

2. A healthy reef has a protective shape. Its hard branches give small fish a place to rest and escape from hunters. During storms, reefs can reduce the force of waves before the waves reach shore. This protection can help beaches and homes near the coast. Reef animals depend on clean water to survive in it.

3. Sometimes water becomes unusually warm. When corals lose algae, they may turn pale. Scientists call this bleaching. A damaged reef can slowly rebuild if water conditions improve. People can help by reducing pollution, which keeps harmful materials out of the ocean. Pollution can make the water unhealthy for reef life and nearby sea animals, too.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. The word microscopic begins with micro, which means small. What does microscopic mean in the passage?

2. The base word protect is in protective and protection. What does protect mean?

3. The prefix re- means again. What does rebuild mean in the passage?

4. The prefix un- means not. What does unusually warm mean?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a word that is not in the passage and has a prefix, suffix, or familiar base word. Write the word, name the word part and its meaning, then use the word in a sentence about the ocean.

ANSWER KEY

Reef Word Detectives

GRADE 3 · ELA.3.V.1.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle a word part, such as a beginning, base, or ending, in each paragraph. Number 1, 2, and 3 beside the three words you use to figure out their meanings from nearby clues. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	The word microscopic begins with micro, which means small. What does microscopic mean in the passage?	**Too small to see without a microscope.**
2	The base word protect is in protective and protection. What does protect mean?	**To keep safe from harm.**
3	The prefix re- means again. What does rebuild mean in the passage?	**To build again.**
4	The prefix un- means not. What does unusually warm mean?	**Warmer than usual.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Reusable: The prefix re- means again, so reusable means able to be used again. We packed reusable bottles for our beach trip.

Accept equivalent meanings that fit the passage, such as “very small” for microscopic and “keep safe” for protect. For Part 3, accept any accurate word-part explanation and a complete ocean-related sentence that uses the chosen word correctly.