Reef Word Detectives

Use nearby words to uncover unfamiliar vocabulary.

ELA.5.V.1 "Finding Meaning"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the clue words and phrases that tell what settle, fragile, resilient, and expel mean. Write 1, 2, 3, and 4 beside the clues for those words in that order.

A Close Look at Coral

1. At dawn, marine biologist Elena Ramirez entered a shallow lagoon beside a coral reef. A lagoon is a calm body of seawater partly protected by land or reef. She carried a slate, a waterproof board for writing notes underwater. Her team was studying how young corals settle, or attach and begin to grow, on hard surfaces.

2. Elena placed a quadrat, a square frame used for counting, on different parts of the reef. Inside each frame, she recorded the kinds of coral she saw. Some branches were fragile, so easily harmed that a strong wave could break them. Other colonies were resilient. After rough water passed, these corals stayed healthy instead of breaking or dying.

3. Elena also watched for bleaching. When seawater stays unusually warm, corals may expel the tiny algae that live inside their tissues. To expel means to force something out. The algae give corals much of their color and some food. Without them, a coral can turn pale or white. If cooler conditions return soon, some bleached corals may recover.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does settle mean as it describes young corals? Use details from paragraph 1.

2. Which details in paragraph 2 help you figure out the meaning of fragile?

3. What does resilient mean in paragraph 2? Explain using the contrast in the paragraph.

4. What does expel mean in paragraph 3, and which words give you the clue?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about an animal or habitat. Use one precise word a reader may not know, and add context clues that reveal the word's meaning.

ANSWER KEY

Reef Word Detectives

GRADE 5 · ELA.5.V.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the clue words and phrases that tell what settle, fragile, resilient, and expel mean. Write 1, 2, 3, and 4 beside the clues for those words in that order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does settle mean as it describes young corals? Use details from paragraph 1.	**It means to attach to a hard surface and begin to grow.**
2	Which details in paragraph 2 help you figure out the meaning of fragile?	**"Easily harmed" and "a strong wave could break them" show that fragile means easily broken or harmed.**
3	What does resilient mean in paragraph 2? Explain using the contrast in the paragraph.	**It means able to stay healthy after rough conditions instead of breaking or dying.**
4	What does expel mean in paragraph 3, and which words give you the clue?	**Expel means to force out. The clue is "To expel means to force something out."**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A desert lizard is nocturnal, or active at night, so it avoids the hottest daytime sun. It rests in a cool burrow until evening.

Accept equivalent meanings when students support them with nearby details from the passage. For the open response, accept any accurate two-sentence topic that includes an unfamiliar word and clear context clues for its meaning.