Comma Reef Rescue

Use commas to show how sentence parts fit together.

ELA.6.C.3 "Following Conventions"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each opening word or phrase that is followed by a comma. Circle each comma before and, but, or, when that word joins two complete thoughts.

Growing a Reef

1. Before sunrise, a small boat leaves the Florida Keys with tanks, ropes, and trays of young coral. The crew is not collecting coral from the reef, but it is carrying coral grown in an underwater nursery. At the nursery, divers attach broken coral pieces to sturdy frames. The pieces receive sunlight and moving water, and they grow into larger branches. Once the branches are ready, the divers move them to damaged reef areas. There, the new coral can help create shelter for fish and other sea animals.

2. Meanwhile, scientists record each coral's size, color, and location. They also check the reef for algae, a plantlike growth that can cover coral. If algae spreads quickly, it can block sunlight from reaching the coral. The team may remove some algae by hand, or it may place herbivorous fish nearby. These fish eat algae, and their feeding can give coral more space. Careful records show which methods work best. Because reefs change over time, the team returns to the same sites again and again.

3. Coral restoration cannot solve every problem because warming water and pollution can harm entire reefs. Still, local projects offer a practical way to rebuild damaged places. After a restoration trip, divers share photos and measurements with scientists on shore. The information helps the group plan its next steps, and it lets community members see the reef's progress. In some areas, students help by learning about reefs and reducing plastic waste. Their choices may seem small, but many small choices can protect the ocean.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which opening word comes before the comma in the first sentence of paragraph 2?

2. In paragraph 1, write the two complete thoughts joined by but in the second sentence.

3. Why is there a comma before or in the sentence beginning “The team may remove”?

4. What opening phrase, followed by a comma, tells when divers share photos and measurements in paragraph 3?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about protecting a natural place. Include one opening word or phrase followed by a comma and one compound sentence with a comma before and, but, or.

ANSWER KEY

Comma Reef Rescue

GRADE 6 · ELA.6.C.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each opening word or phrase that is followed by a comma. Circle each comma before and, but, or, when that word joins two complete thoughts. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which opening word comes before the comma in the first sentence of paragraph 2?	**Meanwhile**
2	In paragraph 1, write the two complete thoughts joined by but in the second sentence.	**The crew is not collecting coral from the reef. It is carrying coral grown in an underwater nursery.**
3	Why is there a comma before or in the sentence beginning “The team may remove”?	**The comma comes before or because or joins two complete thoughts.**
4	What opening phrase, followed by a comma, tells when divers share photos and measurements in paragraph 3?	**After a restoration trip,**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After school, Maya picked up litter along the creek. She sorted the bottles and cans, and she placed them in recycling bins. The clean bank gave turtles a safer place to rest.

Expected underlines include Before sunrise, At the nursery, Once the branches are ready, There, Meanwhile, If algae spreads quickly, Because reefs change over time, Still, After a restoration trip, and In some areas. Expected circles are the commas before but and and in paragraph 1, or and and in paragraph 2, and and and but in paragraph 3; accept open responses that meet both comma requirements and contain three sentences.