

Coral Clues

Notice how exact terms and measurements clarify a science explanation.

6W2.c "Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to explain a topic."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the five bold content-specific terms and circle the two italicized measurements, so you can see how exact words and numbers explain coral stress.

Watching Coral Under Stress

- ① At the aquarium's coral nursery, staff members watch for signs of **coral bleaching**. Corals contain tiny algae called **zooxanthellae**, which use sunlight to make food. When seawater stays unusually warm, stressed corals may push out these algae. Without their food-making partners, the corals lose much of their color and energy. Bleaching does not mean a coral is dead, but it shows that the colony is under stress and may struggle to grow or reproduce successfully later.
- ② To protect the nursery, technicians measure temperature each morning with a **digital sensor**. They also record the coral's color, growth, and feeding response. In one tank, the water reached *31 degrees Celsius for six days*, while a nearby shaded tank stayed cooler. The warmer tank's branching corals became pale, and their *new growth slowed from 4 millimeters to 1 millimeter per week*. These measurements help technicians identify heat stress before the corals lose too much energy.
- ③ Technicians can lower stress by moving nursery frames into deeper water or increasing shade above a tank. These actions do not cool an entire reef, yet they can protect corals in a nursery during a short heat event. Scientists also track **water temperature** and **feeding response** after conditions improve. If corals regain color, add new branches, and capture food, the team has evidence that recovery is beginning. Careful records let the staff compare methods and choose the most effective protection.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why is **zooxanthellae** more precise than the word algae?

2 Which italicized measurement gives evidence that coral growth slowed?

3 What phrase names the problem that technicians identify before corals lose too much energy?

4 How do records of coral color, growth, and feeding response help staff choose a protection method?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence explanation for aquarium visitors about how warm water affects nursery corals and how staff respond. Use at least three bold terms and one italicized measurement from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the five bold content-specific terms and circle the two italicized measurements, so you can see how exact words and numbers explain coral stress. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is zooxanthellae more precise than the word algae?	It names the specific tiny algae that live in corals and use sunlight to make food.
2	Which italicized measurement gives evidence that coral growth slowed?	New growth slowed from 4 millimeters to 1 millimeter per week.
3	What phrase names the problem that technicians identify before corals lose too much energy?	heat stress
4	How do records of coral color, growth, and feeding response help staff choose a protection method?	The records help staff compare how corals respond to different methods and choose the most effective protection.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the coral nursery, unusually warm water can cause **coral bleaching** because corals lose the **zooxanthellae** that help make food. During one heat event, water reached *31 degrees Celsius for six days*, and new coral growth dropped. Technicians use a **digital sensor** to detect conditions that could cause heat stress. They compare color, growth, and **feeding response** after adding shade or moving frames deeper, then select the most effective protection.

Accept answers that accurately explain the role of the named terms and use passage evidence. For the open response, check for four sentences, at least three bold terms, one italicized measurement, and an accurate explanation of both coral stress and staff action.