

Coral Reef Role Play

INSTRUCTIONS for the teacher:

- Pass out species cards to each student. **Each student will play the role of a certain species.**
- Form a circle around the room.
- The teacher reads out the story (“role play”), on the next page. **As each species is named in the role play, the students may step inside the circle to act out their animal species.**
- The story that ensues as students act around the circle will illustrate the animals that live on the reef and what happens to them when certain threats arise.
- At one point, all the animals will be inside the circle working together on the reef.
- By the end, **most of the animals will step out of the circle because they can’t live there anymore due to the threats** (but there’s a happy ending!).

ROLES (suggested numbers of students to play them):

1. SUN - The student can wear sunglasses for fun to play this role (1)
2. PHYTOPLANKTON AND ZOOPLANKTON (2 or more)
3. CORALS (2 or more)
4. JELLYFISH (2 or more)
5. SEA TURTLE (1 or more)
6. CRABS (2 or more)
7. OCTOPUS (1 or more)
8. ANEMONE (1 or more)
9. PARROTFISH AND BUTTERFLY FISH (2 or more)
10. EAGLE RAY (1 or more)
11. SHARK (1 or more)

As listed above, there are 16 roles – if more students want to be a shark or a coral then we’ve listed, for example, that’s fine too! You can draw some extra cards. Please play around as you see fit.

Story (TEACHER reads)

Florida's Coral Reef is a special place where many species come together to live. The coral reef provides food and shelter to all the animals that call the reef home.

The SUN provides energy to help the corals grow.
(SUN comes into the circle)

There are teeny tiny creatures called PHYTOPLANKTON AND ZOOPLANKTON that swim around the reef.
(PHYTOPLANKTON AND ZOOPLANKTON come into the circle, crouch down and do a small swimming motion.)

The CORALS grow strong thanks to the energy they get from eating the phytoplankton and zooplankton. The CORALS reach out their tentacles to eat them.
(CORALS come into the circle and reach out their arms to get the PHYTOPLANKTON AND ZOOPLANKTON.)

JELLYFISH swim around the reef and eat the phytoplankton and zooplankton, too.
(JELLYFISH come into the circle.)

The SEA TURTLE loves to visit the reef. They especially love the yummy jellyfish that live there. That's one of the sea turtles' favorite foods to eat.
(The SEA TURTLE comes into the circle)

The CRABS also enjoy the coral reef. They catch their food with their big crab claws.
(The CRABS come into the circle and can make claw motions with their hands.)

The ANEMONE sways back and forth in the motion of the ocean on the coral reef. Hopefully, the crab doesn't decide to eat too much of the anemones for lunch.
(The ANEMONE comes into the circle.)

The PARROTFISH AND BUTTERFLY FISH spend their time swimming around the coral reef and using it for shelter to hide from predators like the beautiful eagle ray and the king of the reef, the shark.
(PARROTFISH AND BUTTERFLY FISH, EAGLE RAY, and SHARK swim into the circle)
The small fish hide when the sharks come around.
(PARROTFISH AND BUTTERFLY FISH can duck down.)

The CRAB, and the FISH must watch out for the OCTOPUS that glides around the reef.
(OCTOPUS swims into the circle, CRABS can duck down.)

The OCTOPUS will probably use the reef to hide, too, when the shark comes to look for dinner.
(OCTOPUS can duck down.)

All the species are happily living on the reef together. They can each find plenty of food and shelter on the coral reef.

(Everyone is smiling and happy!)

But, oh, no! The sea turtle gets tangled up in some plastic. Someone must not have recycled their trash the right way and it landed in the ocean.

(SEA TURTLE leaves the circle.)

Too many of the sharks are caught in fishing nets. Now they aren't visiting the reef.

(SHARKS leave the circle.)

A big boat drops their anchor in the wrong place and broke off some of the corals.

(One of the CORALS leaves the circle.)

Pollution ran off into the water and it made the rest of the creatures and the corals sick. The fish, the ray and the octopus must try and find a new reef to live on that is in cleaner water.

(One of the CORALS leaves the circle.)

The water temperatures got too warm and it was hard for the corals to survive.

(The CORALS are sad and tired.)

Good news, though! Many human friends realized they could help the reef. They started to do better – recycling, carefully anchoring their boats, not polluting the water and working together to help the Earth get healthy so the temperatures in the ocean were just right for the coral to live. They even tried to teach the fishing boats about better ways to catch fish without hurting other animals in their nets.

When all this happened, the reef got healthy again and ALL THE ANIMALS returned. Everyone was happily living on Florida's Coral Reef again.

(Everyone comes back and swims around and is happy!)