

5 (or so) sites & 10 videos

Coral Reef

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What living organism is 1,400 miles long, can be seen from space, and is home to the millions of sharks? It's the Great Barrier Reef. This month's release of **Coral Reef** by Tinybop inspired us to take a deep dive into these natural wonders.

1. Besides warm, clean saltwater, what does every reef need to survive? At coral.org <http://bitly.com/2oMzBs5> you learn that light is the key ingredient. That's why a reef can only exist in water less than 165 feet deep.

2. What is a coral polyp, and why should you care? They are the tiny organisms that are the building blocks of a reef. Just as a huge cathedral is made of individual bricks, a reef is made of polyps. Related to anemones and jellyfish, they collect the calcium that becomes cement of the reef. Learn more at National Geographic <http://on.natgeo.com/2HWGI9T>.

3. What is largest living organism in the world? It's the Great Barrier Reef. It's bigger than Italy and can be seen from space. Here are some more amazing facts about the reef <http://bit.ly/2I368Ty> and here's what it looks like from a satellite, via Google Maps <https://goo.gl/maps/z9pBtCAu45t>.

4. Do sharks live around reefs? Yes. And so do whales. In fact there are over 3000 fish species that call a reef their home. In Sport Diver magazine, we found some photos <http://bitly.com/2oMGTvP>.

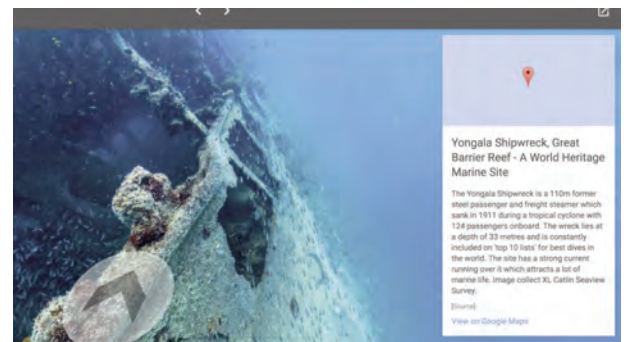
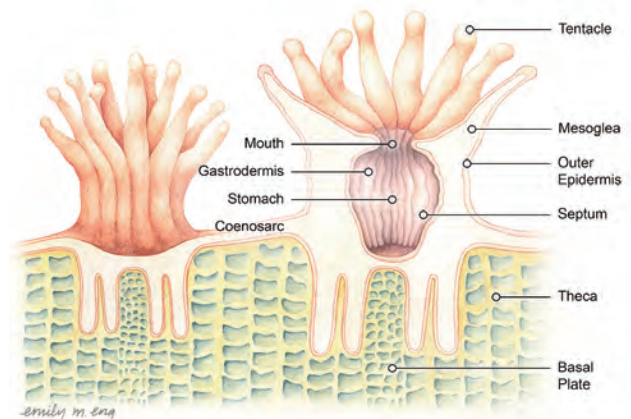
5. Can a reef die? Yes. According to the National Ocean Service things like global warming can stress kill coral, causing them to bleach. Learn more at <http://bitly.com/2HWWpy1>.

APPLICATION

1. Set up your salt water fish tank. It might be hard to grow a reef, but you can buy some living samples for as cheap as \$5 at <http://bitly.com/2HXEZRM>. We found this saltwater kit on Amazon.com for about \$150 <http://amzn.to/2I3aFp2>.

2. Take a virtual dive. Google used it's "street view" technology on a wreck. The result is a virtual dive in the Great Barrier Reef. Here's the link <http://bitly.com/2oLV4Bp>

3. Send a question to an oceanographer. Meet Nancy Knowlton. She works at the Smithsonian as a marine biologist, and her job is to increase public understanding of the world's ocean. She loves your questions, at knowlton@si.edu.



Coral Reef on YouTube

Want more? Here's a video playlist that go along with this column

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwmyxI3rqcF8luTTUF0TGn4X>

