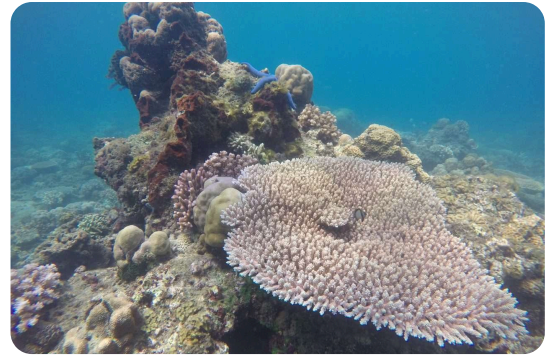




Reef Explorers

Teacher's guide: a board game about what harms and helps coral reefs, for 2 to 6 players, with 36 fact-checked cards



Ages	8 to 14 (grades 3 to 9)
Time	15 to 25 minutes per game, 45 minutes with discussion
Group	2 to 6 players per board
Where	Any classroom or club. No internet needed.
You need	The board (A3 if possible), the three card piles, one dice and a counter per player

What students learn

- Things people do that harm coral reefs, and things that help them.
- Facts about reefs, checked against current science, through the question cards.
- How local actions connect to reef health.
- How to invent and justify new cards about their own area.

Before the lesson

1. Print the **board** on A3 if you can, and the three card sheets on card or thick paper. Cut out the cards and keep each type in its own pile.
2. One set per group of up to six players. Counters can be coins, buttons or bottle caps.

The lesson

- 1 **Introduce 5 minutes.** Explain the three card types: Benefit (light blue) moves you forward, Threat (mid blue) moves you back, Question (dark blue) moves you forward 2 if you answer correctly.
- 2 **Play 20 minutes.** Groups play until someone reaches the Healthy Reef. Let quick groups play again.
- 3 **Discuss 10 minutes.** Which card would help a real reef most? Which threats could our town do something about?
- 4 **Invent 10 minutes.** Each group writes one new Benefit and one new Threat card about their own area, and explains the science behind it.

Answers and what to listen for

About the cards: every Benefit, Threat and Question card was checked against current evidence when the game was rebuilt in 2026. For example, crown-of-thorns starfish are described as native animals that become a problem in outbreaks, not as invaders, and "reef-safe" sunscreen claims were removed because the label has no agreed definition. The answer to each Question card is printed upside down on the card.

Making it easier or harder

- **Younger players:** an adult reads the Question cards and accepts close answers.
- **Older players:** before playing, sort all the Threat cards from most to least serious, and defend the order.
- **Go deeper:** the game is part of lesson 4 of the Coral reefs module, The future of the reef, which covers reef health data and the Apo Island reserve.

Curriculum links

- **Science:** ecosystems, human impact, conservation.
- **Maths:** counting and turn-taking for younger players.
- **Ocean Literacy Principle 6:** the ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.

The teacher reading has the science behind every slide, with links to the sources.

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