**National Geographic Explorer, Pioneer Edition, September 2008 Issue.** Marketed for Grades 2-3.

Reef Rainbow

By Maxine Rose Schur

Dive into a coral reef, and you see swirls of color at every turn. Red, yellow, and blue fish dart through the sunlit water. Purple sea slugs slither past bright orange coral. There is more to the reef than meets the eye. Plunge into a rainbow of color to explore this underwater world.

Where It Happens

Tiny sea animals called coral polyps build reefs. Each animal builds a skeleton around its body. It leaves the skeleton behind when it dies. Other polyps build on top of the skeletons. That creates a reef.

Hiding in the Open

It may seem strange, but bright colors help reef animals hide. Mary fish in the habitat are yellow or blue. With lots of blue and yellow near them, the fish blend in.

Stripes on a fish also help it hide. They seem to break up the shape of its body. Some angelfish survive this way. Stripes on their bodies make them are to see when they are near coral.

Lexile Score: 730L (2-3 grade band)

ATOS: 4.7 grade level (4-5 grade band)

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 3.7 grade level (2-3 and 4-5 grade bands)

Flesch Reading Ease: 84.9 (considered easy for an average 5th grader to understand)

To Subscribe: <https://m1.buysub.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/CategoryDisplay?catalogId=11951&storeId=11951&categoryId=13135&langId=-1>

Website: <http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngexplorer/pioneer/archive/>

This website will allow you to download lesson plans for the various issues published. You might also wish to check out the Pathfinder Edition too. Pathfinder is marketed for the 4th-6th grades and has the same articles, just at a more challenging reading level.