

The Reef Zone

Objective:

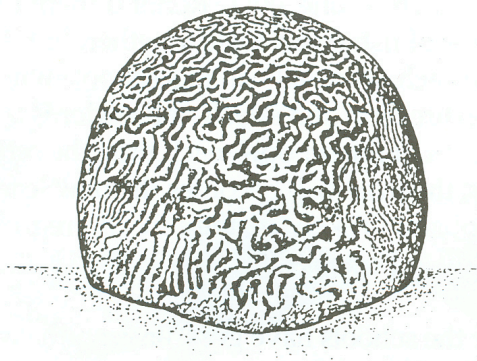
Students will identify the geographic zone where reef-building corals are found.

Materials:

globe or world map
old, large-size world map OR posterboard
colored pens (red, blue, green, black)
poker chips

Action:

1. Use an old, large-size world map as a game board, or make your own by drawing a world map outline onto a large piece of posterboard (try to draw as many South Pacific island groups as possible). Include the equator and latitudes every 10 degrees. Use red ink for the equator, blue or green for 30° N and 30° S, and black for the remaining latitudes. Label the continents of either the old map or your hand-drawn version.



Corals, such as this brain coral generally feed at night.

2. Use a globe or world map to lead your students in a discussion about temperatures around the world. Point out the poles, and ask students if they think it's very warm or very cold there. Explain that as you move away from the poles, temperatures get warmer. Show them where the equator is, and describe the very warm temperatures found there. Share with your

class that the equator is a line of *latitude*—it goes around the globe horizontally. Lines that run vertically from pole to pole are called *longitudes*.

3. Explain to the class that corals are found in all oceans of the world, from pole to pole, but reef-building corals are usually found within a certain range of latitudes. Show them where 30° N and 30° S are located, and tell them that this is the area where most reef-building corals are found.
4. Show students the posterboard map you have drawn, and choose a volunteer to help you point out the equator, 30° N, and 30° S.
5. Lay the posterboard map on the ground and have a student volunteer stand five to six feet away from it. Give the volunteer five poker chips of one color, and ask her/him to try to toss the chip so it lands in the zone where most reef-building corals are found.
6. Leave the game set up in a corner of the room where it will not be disturbed. Invite students to try their tossing skill when they have finished other assignments.

Variation: Draw a large, rough map outline on the playground, and encourage students to either use a standing or running jump to land in the reef zone.