

Source: **The Incredible Coral Reef** by Toni Albert. Trickle Creek Books, 500 Andersonstown Road, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17055 Tel: 1-800-353-2791. Used with permission.

43. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CORAL REEF

Directions: Read the sentences below. Which do you think states the most important reason for protecting coral reefs? Put an X next to the one you choose. Then find out what your choice says about you.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR PROTECTING CORAL REEFS?

- _____ 1. The coral reef is a special place with an incredible diversity of animal life. It is home to many endangered and threatened species of marine wildlife.
- _____ 2. The coral reef attracts visitors from all over the world who like diving, boating, fishing, and exploring nature. Tourist dollars support many local businesses and are often crucial to local economies.
- _____ 3. As our world population continues to grow, we look to the oceans as an important source of food. Many edible marine species depend on healthy coral reefs for breeding and nursery grounds in order to survive.
- _____ 4. Scientists are discovering how to make new agricultural, industrial, and medical products from marine organisms. The coral reef has yielded new medicines, foods, fertilizers, and emulsifiers used in industry.
- _____ 5. When thriving coral reefs become distressed, it is a warning sign that something is critically wrong—something that will ultimately affect our own survival too. It alerts us to examine what we are doing to our air, water, and earth.
- _____ 6. Reefs help protect tropical shores from erosion. Waves caused by tropical storms are weakened as they break on the reefs before reaching the shore.

WHAT DOES YOUR CHOICE SAY ABOUT YOU?

- 1. If you chose the first reason, you are a nature lover. You know more about animals and plants than most of your friends do. You could help protect coral reefs by sharing what you know.
- 2. If you chose the second reason, you have a good mind for business. You could help protect coral reefs by raising funds for an environmental organization.
- 3. If you chose the third reason, you care about the basic needs of people. You could help protect coral reefs by writing letters to politicians and businessmen who make decisions that affect people's lives.
- 4. If you chose the fourth reason, you are a person who values science and technology. You could help protect reefs by coming up with a new idea for letting people know reefs are threatened.
- 5. If you chose the fifth reason, you "think big" and accept responsibility for actively caring for the earth. You could help protect coral reefs by taking practical steps in your own life, such as conserving resources and recycling.
- 6. If you chose the sixth reason, you are a practical person who respects the order and balance of nature. You could help others understand why coral reefs are important in the world.

Correlation to National Standards from McREL (<http://www.mcrel.org>) :

Geography

18. Understands global development and environmental issues