A classroom full of discoveries

Three flexible photo activities for primary classrooms and families. Use the pictures to practise careful observation, discussion, drawing and evidence-based questions.

Suggested time: 15-25 minutes per activity. Adapt the reading, writing and discussion to your learners. These activities can be used without owning a Reef Gang book.



Getting started

Show one photograph. Give children quiet looking time before discussion. Ask: What can you see? What makes you say that? What would you like to find out?

Three useful sentence starters

I notice ... I think ... because ... I wonder ...

Keep observations separate from explanations. A still photograph does not establish an animal's feelings, its identity as a story character, or what happened before and after the picture.

Materials

This pack, pencils and plain paper. Optional: display the website photos at a larger size. Learners can speak, point, draw or write their answers.

1. Look closely

Name: _____ Date: _____



A close view of coral

Find three details you can see.

Look for repeating shapes, colours, edges and small openings. Use describing words.

Draw one detail large enough for someone else to notice it.

My question about this photograph:

Talk together: what can the photo tell us, and what would need more evidence?

2. Compare ocean homes

Name: _____ Date: _____



A. Coral reef



B. Seagrass meadow



C. Sandy seabed

Compare all three photos. Which has the most visible branches, blades or open space? Where could a small animal shelter? Explain using a detail you can see.

One similarity:

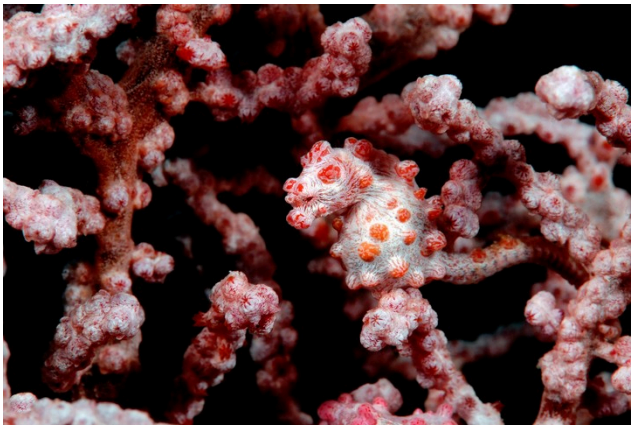
One difference:

Discuss: an animal can use more than one habitat during its life.

Underwater photography © Troy Mayne / Oceanic Imagery

3. A camouflage detective

Name: _____ Date: _____



A. A small seahorse



B. A cuttlefish among seagrass

Find the animal in each picture. Look for an eye, a body edge and a repeated pattern. Which colours and textures also appear in the surroundings?

Clues that helped me find the animal:

Design a paper animal that blends into a patterned background.

Explain your design: which colours, shapes or patterns did you repeat?

Underwater photography © Troy Mayne / Oceanic Imagery

Teacher notes and sources

Activity 1: observation

Accept specific observations of repeated rounded forms, ridges, colours and openings. Corals are animals; many live as colonies of small polyps. Exact coral species identification is not required for this task.

Activity 2: habitats

A habitat is a place where an organism lives. Coral reef structure provides shelter; seagrasses are flowering plants that live underwater. Seagrass meadows provide habitat for many animals. Photographs show only part of each habitat, so visible animal counts do not establish which habitat has the greatest biodiversity.

Activity 3: camouflage

The seahorse and cuttlefish photographs invite comparisons of colour, shape and texture. Cuttlefish can change their skin patterns; a single photograph does not show a colour change happening. Avoid requiring a precise species name from these pictures.

Extension: stories and feelings

Invite learners to invent a Reef Gang adventure about including someone or helping a friend. Label it as an imagined story. Compare the feelings in the story with observations that can be supported by a real photograph.

Sources for educators

1. Australian Institute of Marine Science. "Corals."
Open source

2. Marine Waters, WA. "Fact Sheet: Seagrasses."
Open source

3. Natural History Museum. "Are seahorses the ocean's quirkiest fish?"
Open source

4. Natural History Museum. "Seven sneaky survival strategies of reef animals."
Open source

Sources checked 25 October 2026. Website: www.wallysreefgang.com