

# Coral Reefs: Build & Battle

Age: 7+

Corals are marine invertebrates and an animal that's most closely related to jellyfish and anemones. Some corals catch and eat small fish or plankton to eat, but many will get their nutrients with help from photosynthesizing microorganisms. Generally, corals prefer to live in shallow, warm tropical water. They grow together to form huge coral reefs which provide safety, food and housing for some of our favourite ocean creatures.

The biggest reefs in the world, like the Great Barrier Reef and the Mesoamerican Reef took thousands to millions of years to grow. This is because corals are very slow growers. Baby, planktonic coral will land on a rock and start growing there. They grow between 0.3 cm and 10cm a year depending on the species of coral.

Reefs are biodiversity hotspots and provide safety and housing for many different ocean creatures. Unfortunately, they are under stress from human use and ocean warming/acidification due to climate change. The good news is that organizations like Ocean Wise are working to help combat these conservation issues to help the reefs flourish again. Everyone has a role in protecting our oceans and there are many things you can do from home to help. This activity helps explore at home conservation actions that can help save the reef home of our favourite ocean creatures.

## Steps and materials:

- Building Blocks (any Building materials you have at home. **Warning: they will get knocked over**)
- 2 different sized balls
- Ocean animal toys (or paper cut outs)
- Action cards

## Instructions:

1. Explain how coral reefs grow and how different ocean animals use the reef as their home
2. Split into two teams, with teams on opposite sides of the room
3. Have each group use the building materials to build a coral reef home for some ocean animal toys. They must make sure their animals are hidden from predators/ safe and sound.
4. Once their reef is complete have them sit to the side of it in a line. Then, one person from each team stands up and they pick an action card.
5. If the action card is bad the other team gets to throw a ball at their reef. If the action is good, they get time to re-build their reef. There are two sizes of balls depending on how negative the action is (but you can modify this to your materials and age group). You can discuss the actions and how to make them positive during the game or afterwards.
6. If an animal is exposed after the other team throws the ball, it is removed from the reef. The team with their animals protected the longest is the winning team.
7. If you go through all the cards but the groups are still engaged, you can re-shuffle and continue or add new cards in. Kids can help you brainstorm good and bad actions.

## BATTLE CARDS:

See example battle cards on the next page. Feel free to make up your own cards as you go to add to the game. During the game you can talk to the kids about how each action affects coral reefs and how they help coral reefs survive by taking small actions in their lives.

These resources are brought to you by:

Camps, Clubs, and Youth

[CampsAndClubs@ocean.org](mailto:CampsAndClubs@ocean.org)

(604) 659-3493

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OUR VISION IS A WORLD IN WHICH OCEANS ARE HEALTHY AND FLOURISHING

<p>YOU WALKED TO SCHOOL</p> <p>Rebuild</p>	<p>YOU LEFT THE WATER RUNNING WHILE BRUSHING YOUR TEETH</p> <p>Small ball</p>
<p>YOU ATE A VEGETARIAN MEAL</p> <p>Small ball</p>	<p>YOU DID A SHORELINE CLEANUP</p> <p>Rebuild</p>
<p>YOU PLANTED A TREE</p> <p>Rebuild</p>	<p>YOU ATE AN ENDANGERED FISH</p> <p>Big Ball</p>
<p>YOU STARTED A FOREST FIRE</p> <p>Big Ball</p>	<p>YOU LITTERED</p> <p>Big Ball</p>
<p>YOU LEFT ALL THE LIGHTS ON WHEN YOU LEFT THE HOUSE</p> <p>Big Ball</p>	<p>YOU TURNED OFF THE LIGHTS WHEN YOU LEFT THE ROOM</p> <p>Small ball</p>
<p>YOU ATE OCEAN WISE LABELLED FISH</p> <p>Rebuild</p>	<p>YOU TOOK THE BUS</p> <p>Small Ball</p>