Name: _____ Date: _____

Seagrass: Meadows That Hold the Sea Floor

Circle group

Not all grass grows on land. Seagrass grows underwater in shallow, sunny parts of the sea. It has roots, stems, and green blades. It makes tiny flowers and seeds, too. Seagrass is not seaweed. Seaweed is an alga. It has no true roots. Seagrass roots grip the sand.

The roots hold the sandy bottom in place. Waves and currents cannot carry it away so easily. The blades slow the moving water. Then mud and sand settle to the bottom. The water above gets clearer.

A seagrass meadow is a busy home. Young fish hide in the blades. Big fish cannot find them as well. Small crabs and snails creep on the leaves. Some sea turtles and manatees graze on the grass, like cows in a field. Seagrass takes in carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen. A healthy meadow keeps the coast steady and the sea full of life.

Questions

1. What kind of plant is seagrass?

_____

_____

2. How is seagrass different from seaweed?

_____

_____

3. What do seagrass roots do for the sea floor?

_____

_____

4. Why does the water above a meadow get clearer?

_____

_____

5. Why do young fish hide in the blades?

_____

_____

6. Which animals graze on seagrass?

_____

_____

Words to know

seagrass: a plant with roots and flowers that grows underwater in the sea
alga: a simple plantlike living thing that grows in water
currents: steady flows of water in the sea
meadow: a wide area covered with grass or grasslike plants
graze: to eat plants that are growing in a place

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Seagrass: Meadows That Hold the Sea Floor

Triangle group

Not all grass grows on land. Seagrass is a flowering plant that lives underwater in shallow, sunny parts of the ocean. It has roots, stems, and long green blades, and it even makes tiny flowers and seeds. Seagrass is not the same as seaweed. Seaweed is a kind of alga and has no true roots, while seagrass roots grip the sand.

Those roots do a big job. They weave through the sandy bottom and hold it in place, so waves and currents cannot carry it away so easily. The blades also slow the moving water. When water slows down, the bits of mud and sand it carries settle to the bottom, and the water above becomes clearer.

A seagrass meadow is a busy neighborhood, too. Young fish hide among the blades, where bigger fish have a harder time finding them. Small crabs and snails creep along the leaves. Some sea turtles and manatees graze on the grass the way cows graze in a field. Like land plants, seagrass takes in carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen. A healthy meadow helps keep the coast steady, the water clear, and the sea full of life.

Questions

1. What kind of plant is seagrass?

_____

_____

2. How is seagrass different from seaweed?

_____

_____

3. What do the roots of seagrass do for the sea floor?

_____

_____

4. Why does the water above a seagrass meadow become clearer?

_____

_____

5. Why do young fish hide among the blades?

_____

_____

6. Which animals graze on seagrass?

_____

_____

Words to know

seagrass: a plant with roots and flowers that grows underwater in the sea
alga: a simple plantlike living thing that grows in water
currents: steady flows of water in the sea
meadow: a wide area covered with grass or grasslike plants
graze: to eat plants that are growing in a place

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Seagrass: Meadows That Hold the Sea Floor

Square group

Not all grass grows on dry land. Seagrass is a flowering plant that thrives underwater in the shallow, sunlit regions of the ocean. It has roots, stems, and long green blades, and it even produces tiny flowers and seeds. Seagrass should not be confused with seaweed. Seaweed is a type of alga that has no true roots, whereas the roots of seagrass grip the sand firmly.

Those roots perform an important job. They weave through the sandy bottom and hold it in place, so the waves and currents cannot sweep it away as easily. The blades also slow the moving water, and when water slows down, the bits of mud and sand it has been carrying settle to the bottom, which leaves the water above noticeably clearer.

A seagrass meadow is a bustling neighborhood as well. Young fish hide among the blades, where larger fish have a much harder time finding them, and small crabs and snails creep along the leaves. Some sea turtles and manatees graze on the grass in the same way that cows graze in a field. Like plants on land, seagrass takes in carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen. A healthy meadow helps to keep the coastline steady, the water clear, and the sea teeming with life.

Questions

1. What kind of plant is seagrass?

_____

_____

2. How does seagrass differ from seaweed?

_____

_____

3. What do the roots of seagrass do for the sea floor?

_____

_____

4. Why does the water above a seagrass meadow become clearer?

_____

_____

5. Why do young fish hide among the blades of seagrass?

_____

_____

6. Which animals graze on seagrass the way cows graze in a field?

_____

_____

Words to know

seagrass: a plant with roots and flowers that grows underwater in the sea
alga: a simple plantlike living thing that grows in water
currents: steady flows of water in the sea
meadow: a wide area covered with grass or grasslike plants
graze: to eat plants that are growing in a place

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Seagrass: Meadows That Hold the Sea Floor

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Seagrass: Meadows That Hold the Sea Floor

Easier · 148 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.6

1. A flowering plant that grows underwater in shallow, sunny sea water.
2. Seagrass has true roots that grip the sand, but seaweed is an alga with no true roots.
3. They hold the sand and mud in place.
4. The blades slow the water, so mud and sand settle to the bottom.
5. Big fish cannot find them as well there.
6. Some sea turtles and manatees.

Triangle: Seagrass: Meadows That Hold the Sea Floor

This passage · 193 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.9

1. A flowering plant that grows underwater in shallow, sunny ocean water.
2. Seagrass has true roots that grip the sand, but seaweed is an alga with no true roots.
3. They hold the sand and mud in place.
4. The blades slow the water, so mud and sand settle to the bottom.
5. Bigger fish have a harder time finding them there.
6. Some sea turtles and manatees.

Square: Seagrass: Meadows That Hold the Sea Floor

Harder · 211 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.5

1. A flowering plant that grows underwater in the shallow, sunlit parts of the ocean.
2. Seagrass has true roots that grip the sand, while seaweed is an alga with no true roots.
3. They hold the sand and mud in place.
4. The blades slow the water, so the mud and sand it carries settle to the bottom.
5. Larger fish have a much harder time finding them there.
6. Some sea turtles and manatees.