IUCN flags extreme risk to coral reefs

LEVEL C1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What do coral reefs provide to people and coasts?
2. Have you ever snorkelled or dived on a reef? What did you see?
3. Which climate impacts worry you most, and why?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

classify
to put things into set groups based on shared features

assessment
a careful study to judge a situation or risk

critically endangered
at the highest risk level before likely extinction

extinction
the complete disappearance of a species or system

bleaching
a stress process where corals lose colour and vital algae

vulnerable
easily harmed or damaged; open to risk

biodiversity
the variety of living species in an ecosystem

resilience
the ability to recover after damage or stress

III. READING

Almost all of the world's shallow-water coral reefs face an extremely high risk of collapse, according to a global assessment by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The study classified 96 percent of assessed reef systems as critically endangered, meaning extinction of entire reef ecosystems is possible by 2075. Corals are heat-sensitive and vulnerable to human-driven warming, which has made mass bleaching more frequent and intense.

Using a middle-of-the-road climate scenario that projects about 2.7C of warming by 2100, it also noted pressure from a recent "super" El Niño.

Famous systems such as Australia's Great Barrier Reef, the Coral Triangle, the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System and reefs in the Red Sea are all listed as critically endangered. Reefs buffer coasts from storms, support tourism and fisheries, and host rich biodiversity.

Related findings deepen concern: an IUCN-linked study reported that nearly 44 percent of reef-building coral species face elevated extinction risk, and a survey last year found harmful bleaching on about 84 percent of reefs. Yet the IUCN says reefs are not yet lost.

Some pockets show resilience and can bounce back after severe events, so faster cuts to warming and protection of local waters could still help them endure.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **Al Jazeera***: "Almost all shallow-water coral reefs now face...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who carried out the global assessment of coral reefs?
2. What share of assessed reef systems were classified as critically endangered?
3. Which climate scenario did the assessment use, and what warming does it project?
4. Name two famous reef systems listed as critically endangered.
5. Why does the IUCN still say reefs are not yet lost?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Which reef benefits matter most for your country, and why?
2. What local actions could reduce bleaching or help reefs recover?
3. Do stark numbers motivate action or cause fatigue? Explain.
4. Should tourism rules change near reefs? What would be fair?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Three-word phrasal-prepositional verbs

Verb + particle + preposition (e.g., live up to). These are fixed and inseparable: the object comes after the preposition (They live up to promises).

> *"Authorities must* **crack down on** *illegal coastal dumping."*
>
> *"Projects must* **live up to** *conservation promises."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Scientists came up (against / with) fierce bleaching. _____
2. Officials must face (the risks up to / up to the risks). _____
3. Reserves make (up for losses / losses up for). _____
4. Projects cut (waste down on / down on waste). _____
5. During El Niño, managers ran (supplies out of / out of supplies). _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading, 10 minutes comprehension, 10 minutes discussion (grammar can share the reading block).
- Pre-teach place names (Great Barrier Reef, Coral Triangle) and check students recognise IUCN; highlight figures (96%, 2.7C, 2075, 44%, 84%) so learners anchor answers in the text.
- Run a first silent read for gist, then a second focused read to underline data points; sensitivity: environmental loss can be personal for students from coastal areas—allow opt-out from personal stories and keep discussion on policies and solutions.
- Differentiate: stronger students summarise the argument using the numbers; others match causes (warming, El Niño) to effects (bleaching, collapse) with sentence frames before open discussion.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Put benefits on the board (protection, jobs, food) and ask for one example per student before deeper reasons.
2. Elicit concrete local steps first (waste, fishing rules), then push for who should act and how to check results.
3. Take a quick show of hands, pair students with an opposite view, and require one reason plus one risk.
4. Brainstorm current rules, then form small groups to draft one change and predict its impact on locals.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In two teams, propose and defend a 5-point local plan to help reefs; present in 5 minutes.

Writing: Write a 120-word briefing note summarising the IUCN findings and one action your city could take.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Three-word phrasal-prepositional verbs

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who carried out the global assessment of coral reefs?
   The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
2. What share of assessed reef systems were classified as critically endangered?
   96 percent.
3. Which climate scenario did the assessment use, and what warming does it project?
   A middle-of-the-road scenario projecting about 2.7C by 2100.
4. Name two famous reef systems listed as critically endangered.
   The Great Barrier Reef and the Coral Triangle.
5. Why does the IUCN still say reefs are not yet lost?
   Some pockets show resilience and can recover if stress is reduced.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Verb + particle + preposition (e.g., live up to). These are fixed and inseparable: the object comes after the preposition (They live up to promises). (Examples constructed.)

> *"Authorities must* **crack down on** *illegal coastal dumping."*
>
> *"Projects must* **live up to** *conservation promises."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Scientists came up (against / with) fierce bleaching. **against**
2. Officials must face (the risks up to / up to the risks). **up to the risks**
3. Reserves make (up for losses / losses up for). **up for losses**
4. Projects cut (waste down on / down on waste). **down on waste**
5. During El Niño, managers ran (supplies out of / out of supplies). **out of supplies**