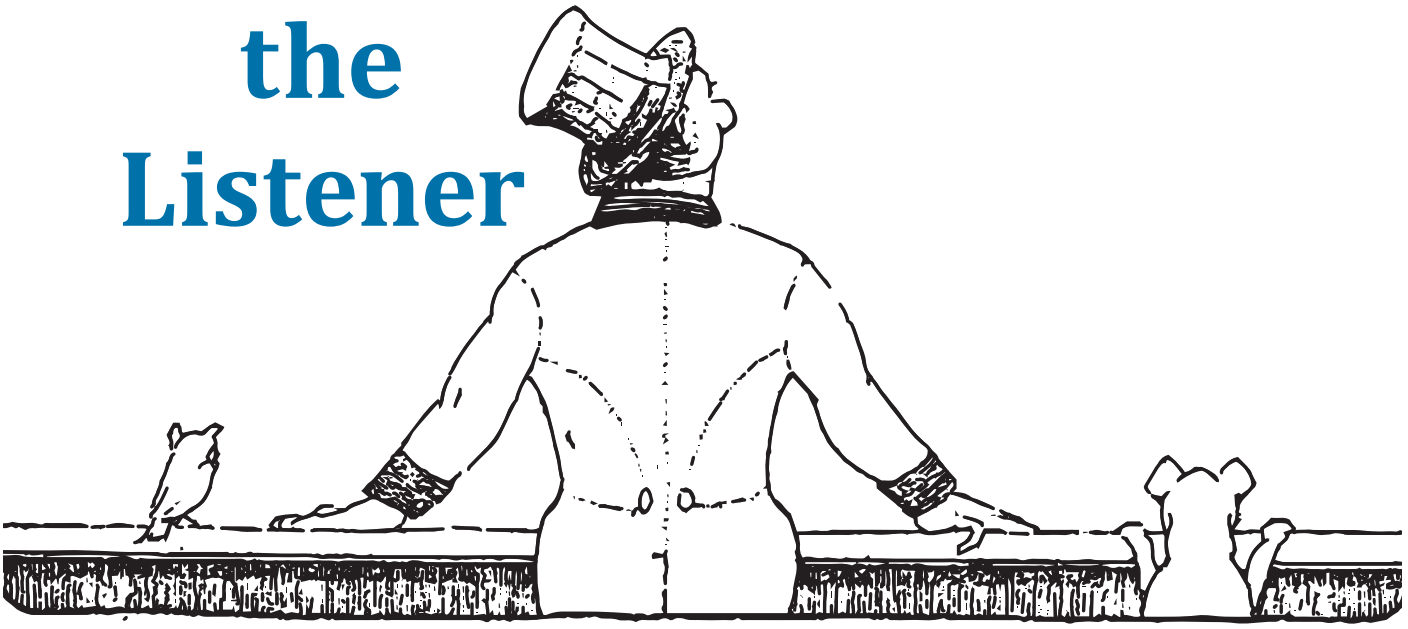
Scholastic Short Reads Sample

SHORT READS Fiction

Too-Too the Listener



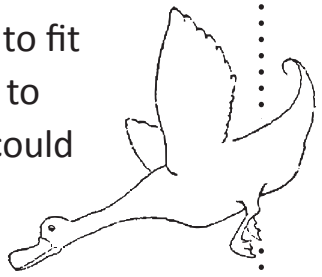
Doctor Dolittle was a very special doctor. He could understand animals and talk to them. In this part of the story, Doctor Dolittle has scared a band of pirates into becoming farmers. He and his animal crew set off in the pirates' ship. With him are Dab-Dab the duck, Jip the dog and Too-Too the owl. They are going home.

The doctor stood on the deck of the ship. He watched the Canary Islands fade away in the blue dusk of the evening.

Dab-Dab came tumbling up the stairs. 'Doctor!' she cried. 'The beds downstairs are made of silk, and there are all sorts of good things to eat and drink. Oh, and we found a room with a locked door. Jip says it must be the pirates' treasure room. But we can't get in.'

The doctor went downstairs, where the animals were gathered around a little door. The doctor couldn't open it either. They went hunting for the key.

They found wonderful things that the pirates had stolen from other ships. But nowhere in the whole ship could they find a key to fit that lock. They went back to stand by the door. What could they do?



SCHOLASTIC

Adapted from a story by Hugh Lofting

Box 3 • 540L ■ Level 23

The owl, Too-Too, suddenly said, 'Sh! Listen. There's someone in there.'

They all kept still a moment. Then, the doctor said, 'I don't hear anything.'

'Sh!' said the owl. 'There it is again. I hear someone putting his hand in his pocket.'

'But that makes hardly any sound at all,' said the doctor. 'You couldn't hear that out here.'

'Oh, but I can,' said Too-Too. 'Almost everything makes a noise, if your ears are sharp enough to catch it. Owls are very good listeners. I can tell the colour of a kitten from the way it winks in the dark.'

'Well, well!' said the doctor. 'That's very interesting. Listen again, Too-Too. What is he doing now?'

After a moment, Too-Too spoke. 'He's rubbing his face with his left hand. It's a small hand and a small face. It might be a woman. No. Now he pushes his hair back off his forehead. It's a man.'

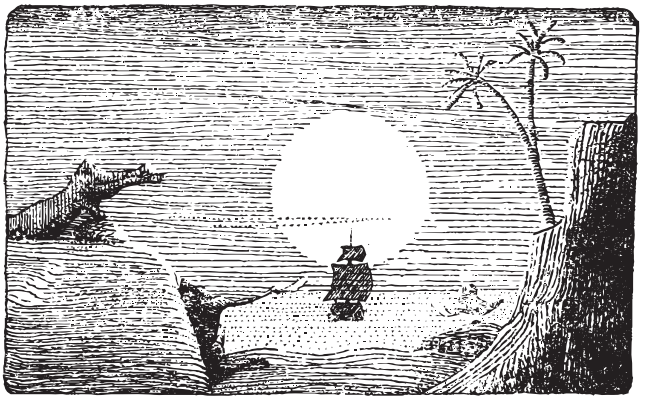
Too-Too listened again, long and hard.

He finally said, 'The man is unhappy. He weeps. He's trying to be quiet, so we won't hear him. But I heard a tear falling on his sleeve.'

'How do you know that?' asked Dab-Dab. 'Couldn't it have been a drop of water falling from the ceiling?'

'Pshaw!' sniffed Too-Too. 'That would make ten times as much noise!'

'Well,' said the doctor. 'Let's find out why the poor fellow is unhappy. Find me an axe. I'll chop down the door.'



TM ® & © Scholastic Inc. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2018 by Scholastic Inc.

Fantasy

Silver, Level 23, 540L

Origin of Text: UK

Summary: As Dr Dolittle and his friends set off on a pirate ship, a locked room is discovered. Too-Too the owl, who has sharp ears, hears a man crying inside.

Themes: mystery, helping others, animal abilities

Text Features: introduction, paragraphs, dialogue, illustrations

Literature Focus:

- hyperbole: I can tell the colour of a kitten from the way it winks in the dark
- sensory language: I heard a tear falling on his sleeve

Spelling:

- onomatopoeia: pshaw
- '-ear' letter group: ear, hear, tear, heard
- homonyms: hear, here

Vocabulary/Grammar/Punctuation:

- nouns as names: Doctor
- '-er' nouns of agency: listener, farmer
- verb position in command or instruction sentence: Let's find, Find me, Listen again
- possessive apostrophe for plural nouns: pirates'

Too-Too the Listener

Focus Question: What special abilities do some animals have?

PREPARE & READ

- *Read the title and introduction. Explain this is an excerpt (part of a story).*
- *Ask students to look at the illustrations. Ask where the story might be set.* (ship)
- *Ask students to read the card.*

READ CLOSELY

Key Ideas and Details

What problem do the animals and Dr Dolittle have? *(can't get into room)* How do they try to solve it? *(look all over ship for key)* 4–6

What do the first and last pictures tell you that isn't in the text? 1 14

> *. . . They give details about what the doctor and his friends look like. For example, I can see Too-Too is small. They also show me the story is set long ago, as the doctor wears old-fashioned clothes and the ship has sails. The last picture has palm trees, which means they are somewhere warm.*

Characters

What can Too-Too do that the others can't? *(hear every sound)* Does Dr Dolittle believe him? *(yes)* What does that show about the doctor? *(trusts animals)* 7–12

Author's Word Choices

Sometimes authors say something is bigger, smaller, better or worse than it really could be. This is called exaggeration or hyperbole. What do you think Too-Too really could or couldn't hear? Why do you think the author has exaggerated? 7–13

> *. . . Owls have excellent hearing, so I think Too-Too can hear things the others can't. However, even he couldn't tell what colour a kitten is when he hears it wink. I think the author exaggerated and mixed up what ears and eyes tell us, to make the story funny.*

Make Connections

What does Too-Too hear the person in the room doing? *(weeping)* Why do you think the doctor decides to chop down the door? *(reach person in room, find out why unhappy)* 12 13

Punctuation

An apostrophe is sometimes used to show someone owns something. Find an apostrophe on page 1. Where is it placed and why? *(after 's' in 'pirates', as there is more than one pirate—if only one, would be before 's')* 2

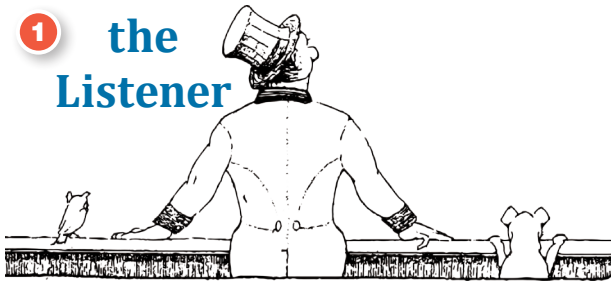
Make Inferences

How do you know the pirates have changed the way they live? *(introduction says they became farmers; lots of fine things on ship they had stolen, but they left it all behind, as they don't want it any more)* 2–4

Scholastic Short Reads Sample

SHORT READS Fiction

Too-Too the Listener



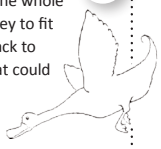
Doctor Dolittle was a very special doctor. He could understand animals and talk to them. In this part of the story, Doctor Dolittle has scared a band of pirates into becoming farmers. He and his animal crew set off in the pirates' ship. With him are Dab-Dab the duck, Jip the dog and Too-Too the owl. They are going home.

The doctor stood on the deck of the ship. He watched the Canary Islands fade away in the blue dusk of the evening.

Dab-Dab came tumbling up the stairs. 'Doctor!' she cried. 'The beds downstairs are made of silk, and there are all sorts of good things to eat and drink. Oh, and we found a room with a locked door. Jip says it must be the pirates' treasure room. But we can't get in.'

The doctor went downstairs, where the animals were gathered around a little door. The doctor couldn't open it either. They went hunting for the key.

They found wonderful things that the pirates had stolen from other ships. But nowhere in the whole ship could they find a key to fit that lock. They went back to stand by the door. What could they do?



Adapted from a story by Hugh Lofting

SCHOLASTIC

Box 3 • 540L ■ Level 23

The owl, Too-Too, suddenly said, 'Sh! Listen. There's someone in there.'

They all kept still a moment. Then, the doctor said, 'I don't hear anything.'

'Sh!' said the owl. 'There it is again. I hear someone putting his hand in his pocket.'

'But that makes hardly any sound at all,' said the doctor. 'You couldn't hear that out here.'

'Oh, but I can,' said Too-Too. 'Almost everything makes a noise, if your ears are sharp enough to catch it. Owls are very good listeners. I can tell the colour of a kitten from the way it winks in the dark.'

'Well, well!' said the doctor. 'That's very interesting. Listen again, Too-Too. What is he doing now?'

After a moment, Too-Too spoke. 'He's rubbing his face with his left hand. It's a small hand and a small face. It might be a woman. No. Now he pushes his hair back off his forehead. It's a man.'

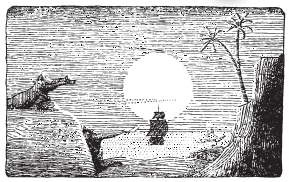
Too-Too listened again, long and hard.

He finally said, 'The man is unhappy. He weeps. He's trying to be quiet, so we won't hear him. But I heard a tear falling on his sleeve.'

'How do you know that?' asked Dab-Dab. 'Couldn't it have been a drop of water falling from the ceiling?'

'Pshaw!' sniffed Too-Too. 'That would make ten times as much noise!'

'Well,' said the doctor. 'Let's find out why the poor fellow is unhappy. Find me an axe. I'll chop down the door.'



TM © & © Scholastic Inc. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2018 by Scholastic Inc.

DISCUSS

These questions can be used for paired discussion. Ask students to use the text to support their reasoning. Then, ask them to share their conclusions with the group.

- Apart from being able to speak to animals, how would you describe the doctor? *(kind; patient; trusting; loves adventure)*
- What does the doctor do when Dab-Dab and Too-Too disagree about whether the person is weeping or not? *(doesn't get involved; just talks about what to do next)* Why do you think he does this? *(maybe used to them disagreeing; needs to reach unhappy person)*
- Do you think Too-Too will be right about who is in the room? Why/Why not? *(at least partly right: a person, weeps so is unhappy)* What do you think will happen next? *(meet person; learn about him/her; find out why unhappy; help person)*

WRITE

Have students choose either one of the following options for writing, or do both.

- Draw the person in the room after Dr Dolittle breaks in. Write a short dialogue between them. *('Who are you?' said the _____, peeping out from behind a box.)* **(Information/Explanation)**
- How do you think the unhappy person will feel when he/she realises Dr Dolittle talks to animals? Why? Complete the following sentence. *I think the person will feel _____ because _____.* **(Opinion)**

Author Note: Hugh Lofting (1886–1947) was born in England and settled in New York. During World War I, he was a soldier. He invented Dr Dolittle and wrote about him in letters to his children. The first Dr Dolittle book was published in 1920.

Scholastic Short Reads Sample

Scholastic Short Reads Sample

SHORT READS
Non-fiction

Reef Predators

Coral reefs are mostly found in the warm waters around the equator. They make up a tiny part of Earth's surface. Yet one-quarter of all sea creatures live on coral reefs! They are the 'big cities' of the ocean.

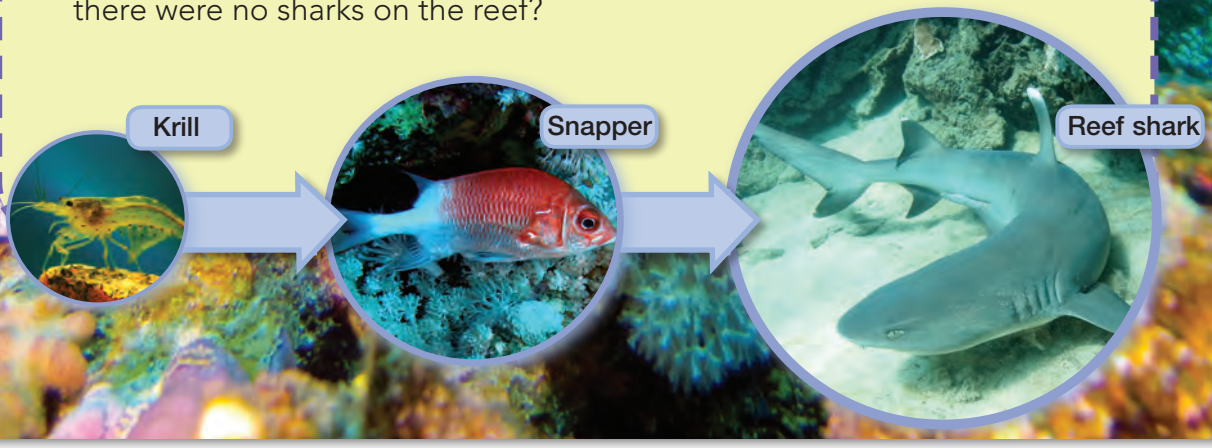
What Lives on Reefs?

- Corals come in all shapes and colours. Many kinds of starfish live among them. Sponges, crabs, octopuses and squid also live there.
- Sea grass meadows grow in and around reefs. Sea turtles and dugongs eat the sea grass. The meadows provide a safe place for fish to breed.
- Fish of all sizes live on reefs, from tiny gobies to giant barracuda.

Coral reefs are teeming with life. It's not surprising that predators love reefs too! So what are the top predators of the reef? Let's take a look at the food chain.

Who eats what?

Algae and tiny plants live among the coral. They are eaten by tiny animals such as krill. The krill feed small fish. These feed larger fish. Right at the top of the food chain are sharks. What would happen if there were no sharks on the reef?



Scholastic Short Reads Sample

Built for Speed

The powerful barracuda is one of the largest reef fish. Although thin, barracuda can grow to 2 metres in length. All types of fish are their prey.

They're fast and aggressive hunters! Swimmers and divers need to be careful. A barracuda might mistake them for prey.

In Caves and Crevices

Whitetip reef sharks are small. They grow to less than 2 metres long. They spend their lives on reefs. During the day, they rest in caves or on the sea floor.

At night they hunt. They like slow-moving animals such as crabs, lobsters and eels. Sleeping fish are a good target. They also chase fish through crevices (narrow spaces) in the reef.

In the Spotlight

Tiger Sharks

Divers who explore reefs know that most sharks won't attack. But tiger sharks mean danger!

Tiger sharks start life with stripes. Their stripes fade as they get older. These sharks can be over 4 metres long. That's about the length of a minivan.

Why do these fast-moving, powerful sharks visit coral reefs? They're looking for food. They eat everything from sea snakes to other sharks! They'll eat almost anything they find!

Photos side 1 bkgd: © Mychadre77/Dreamstime, l to r: © Mikhailg/Dreamstime, © Subsurface/Dreamstime, © TriggerfishSaul/iStockphoto; side 2bkgd: © Michal Bednarek/Dreamstime, t to b: © Laban712/Wikipedia, Naluphoto/Dreamstime

Fact File

Silver/White, Level 24, 600L

Text Type: Explanation

Summary: This fact book discusses food chains in coral reefs and the kinds of predators that are at the top.

Themes/Ideas: understand characteristics of coral reefs; recognise different reef predators and their characteristics

Text Features: photos, text boxes, bullets, diagrams

Vocabulary:

- ***coral reefs:*** underwater habitats made from coral
- ***creatures:*** animals
- ***crevices:*** tight spaces
- ***dugong:*** a large sea animal that eats seagrass, often called a 'sea cow'
- ***food chain:*** the relationship between creatures in a habitat that describes what they eat and are eaten by
- ***goby:*** small fish
- ***sea turtle:*** a reptile with a hard shell on its back, lives in the sea
- ***seagrass:*** flowering plants that grow on the sea bed

Reef Predators

Focus Question: Why are sharks and other reef predators and coral reefs so important to each other?

PREPARE & READ

- *Note that this card is from a fact file about coral reefs.*
- *Discuss the meaning of the word* predators.
- *Ask students to read the card.*

READ CLOSELY

Key Ideas and Details

Reread the first section of text. What information does it give? Does this paragraph serve as an effective introduction to the rest of the text? Explain. 1

Author's Purpose/Intention

How is the information on the front of the card different from the information on the back? Why do you think the author presented the information in this order? 1–7

Vocabulary/Text Feature

What is a "food chain"? What phrases in the text help you understand what a *food chain* is? How does the diagram help you understand the definition of *food chain*? 3 4

> *. . . A food chain is a system in a habitat, a place where animals normally live. The text tells me that "Algae and tiny plants live among the coral. They are eaten by tiny animals such as krill. The krill feed small fish. These feed larger fish". It also says, "Right at the top of the food chain are sharks". The diagram shows me a shark at the end of the food chain with smaller sea animals before it. A chain links several things together, so a food chain shows how animals are linked with what they eat (and what eats them).*

Text Feature

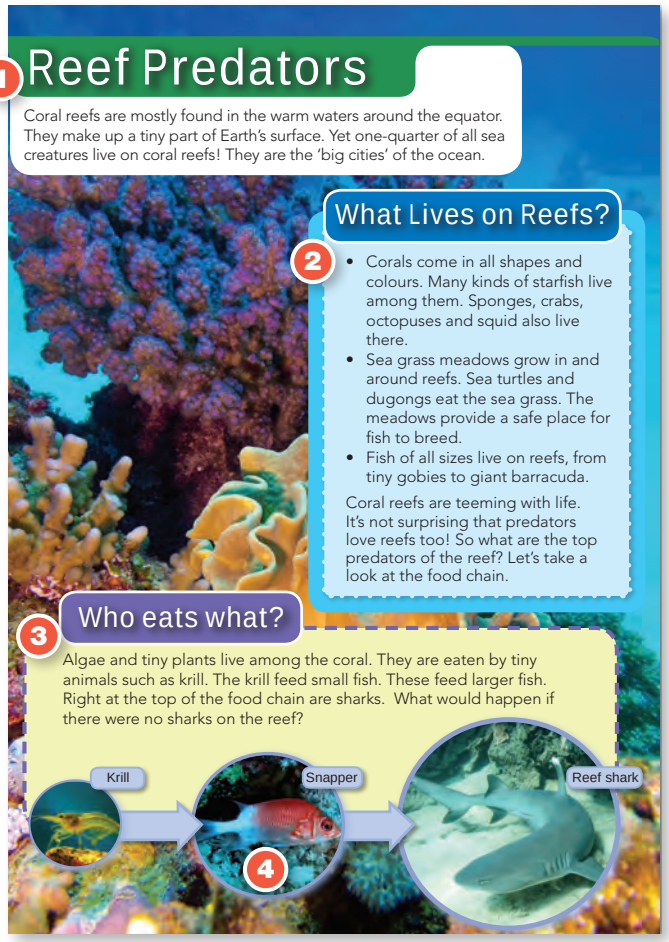
Look at the diagram at the bottom of the "Who eats what?" section. How do the arrows help support the information in the text? 4

Words and Phrases in Context

Authors sometimes use a difficult word and then give its definition. Look for an example of this in the section "In Caves and Crevices". How does this technique help you understand the word *crevices*? 6

> *. . . In the "In Caves and Crevices" section, the phrase "crevices (narrow spaces)" appears. The parentheses show that the word* crevices *is being defined. This technique helps me understand that crevices are narrow spaces.*

Scholastic Short Reads Sample



1 Reef Predators

Coral reefs are mostly found in the warm waters around the equator. They make up a tiny part of Earth's surface. Yet one-quarter of all sea creatures live on coral reefs! They are the 'big cities' of the ocean.

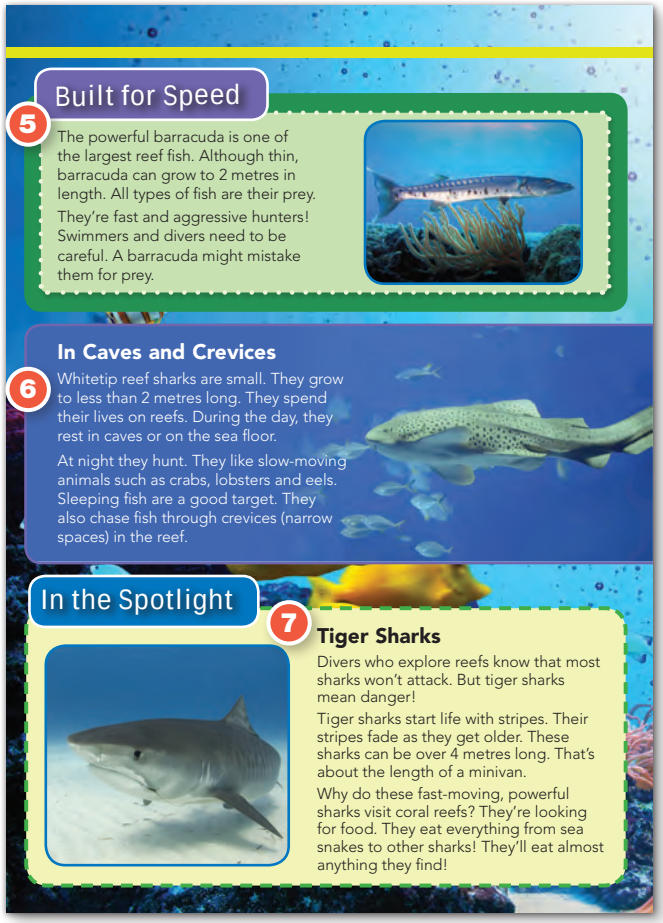
2 What Lives on Reefs?

- Corals come in all shapes and colours. Many kinds of starfish live among them. Sponges, crabs, octopuses and squid also live there.
- Sea grass meadows grow in and around reefs. Sea turtles and dugongs eat the sea grass. The meadows provide a safe place for fish to breed.
- Fish of all sizes live on reefs, from tiny gobies to giant barracuda.

Coral reefs are teeming with life. It's not surprising that predators love reefs too! So what are the top predators of the reef? Let's take a look at the food chain.

3 Who eats what?

Algae and tiny plants live among the coral. They are eaten by tiny animals such as krill. The krill feed small fish. These feed larger fish. Right at the top of the food chain are sharks. What would happen if there were no sharks on the reef?



5 Built for Speed

The powerful barracuda is one of the largest reef fish. Although thin, barracuda can grow to 2 metres in length. All types of fish are their prey.

They're fast and aggressive hunters! Swimmers and divers need to be careful. A barracuda might mistake them for prey.

6 In Caves and Crevices

Whitetip reef sharks are small. They grow to less than 2 metres long. They spend their lives on reefs. During the day, they rest in caves or on the sea floor.

At night they hunt. They like slow-moving animals such as crabs, lobsters and eels. Sleeping fish are a good target. They also chase fish through crevices (narrow spaces) in the reef.

In the Spotlight

7 Tiger Sharks

Divers who explore reefs know that most sharks won't attack. But tiger sharks mean danger!

Tiger sharks start life with stripes. Their stripes fade as they get older. These sharks can be over 4 metres long. That's about the length of a minivan.

Why do these fast-moving, powerful sharks visit coral reefs? They're looking for food. They eat everything from sea snakes to other sharks! They'll eat almost anything they find!

DISCUSS

These questions can be used for paired discussion. Ask students to use the text to support their reasoning. Then ask them to share their conclusions with the group.

- How did the author organise information on these pages? Are all the sections organised in the same way? Can you find an example of bulleted points, description and cause–effect order?
- How do the details about each kind of predator help you better understand the relationship between the predators and the coral reefs?
- What can you infer about the importance of coral reefs to ocean life? What information from the text supports your inference?

WRITE

Have students choose either one of the following options for writing, or do both.

- What do the predators described in the text have in common? Summarise what you learned about the sharks from the text. **(Information/ Explanation)**
- Which predator described in the text seems most dangerous to humans? Write a paragraph, stating your opinion and supporting it with facts and details from the text. **(Opinion)**

How Do You Know? The text says that tiger sharks "mean danger". What details in the text tell you why tiger sharks might be dangerous to people?

Scholastic Short Reads Sample