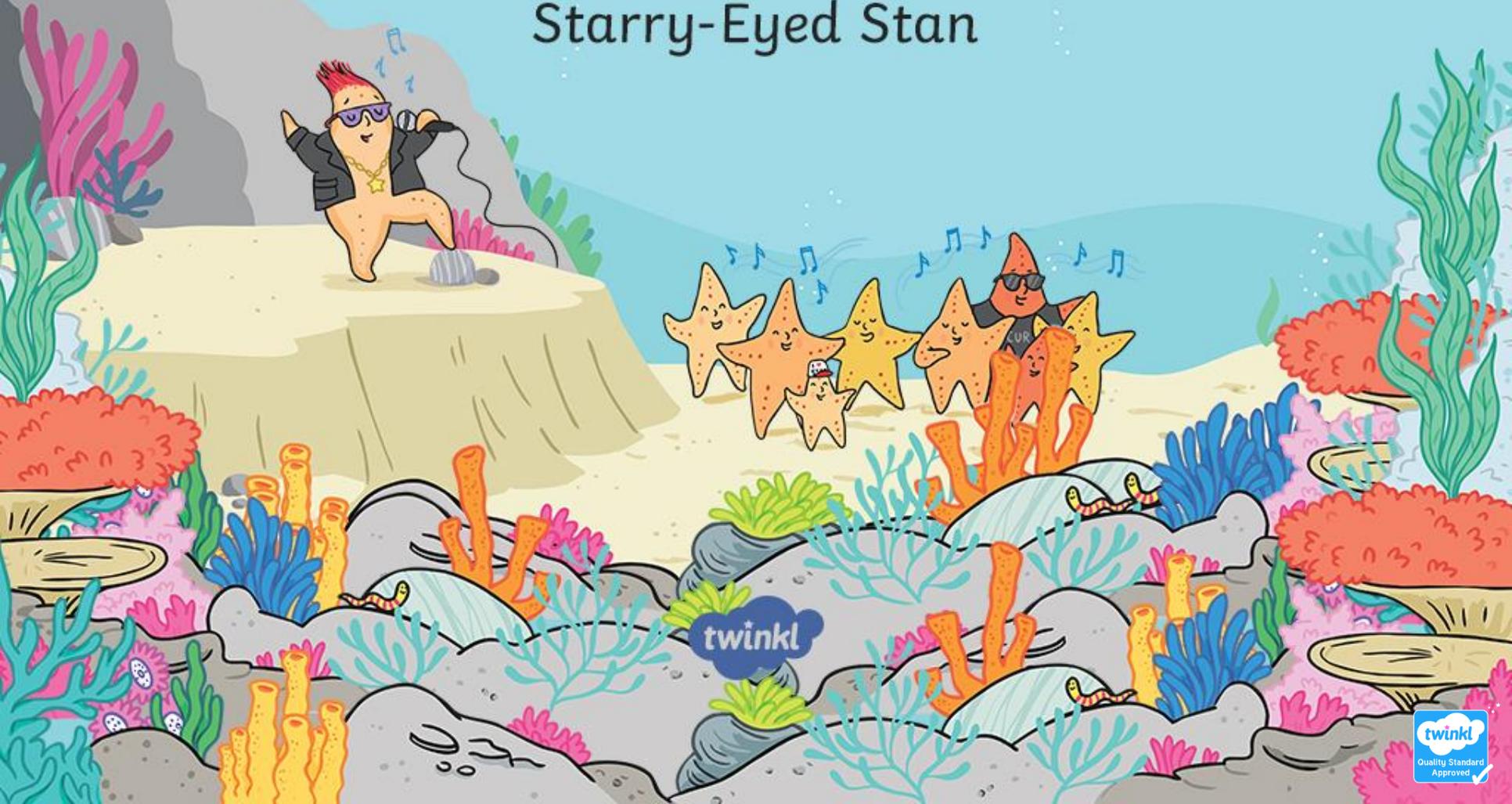


Life in a Coral Reef

Starry-Eyed Stan



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What Is a Coral Reef?

Corals are made up of tiny animals called **polyps**. These can be living or dead. They are very fragile.

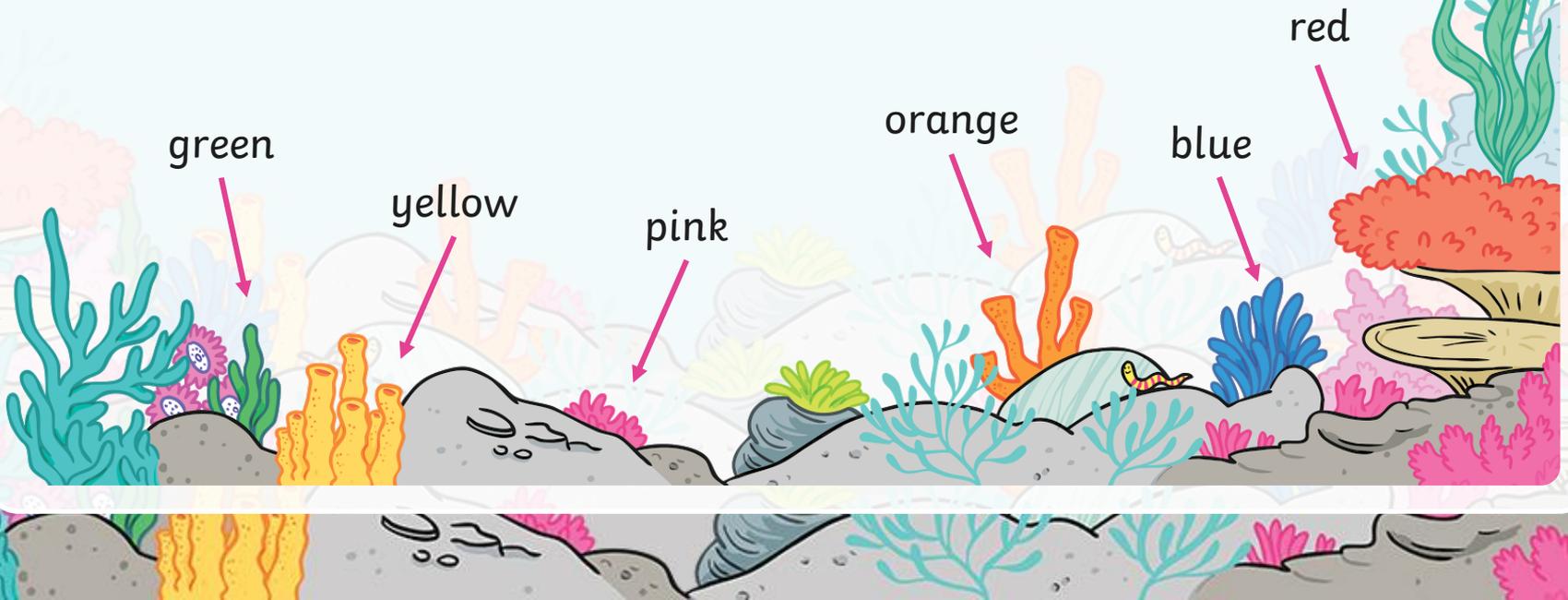
The very first coral reefs formed about **500 million years** ago!



What Does a Coral Reef Look Like?

Most corals are **brightly coloured**.

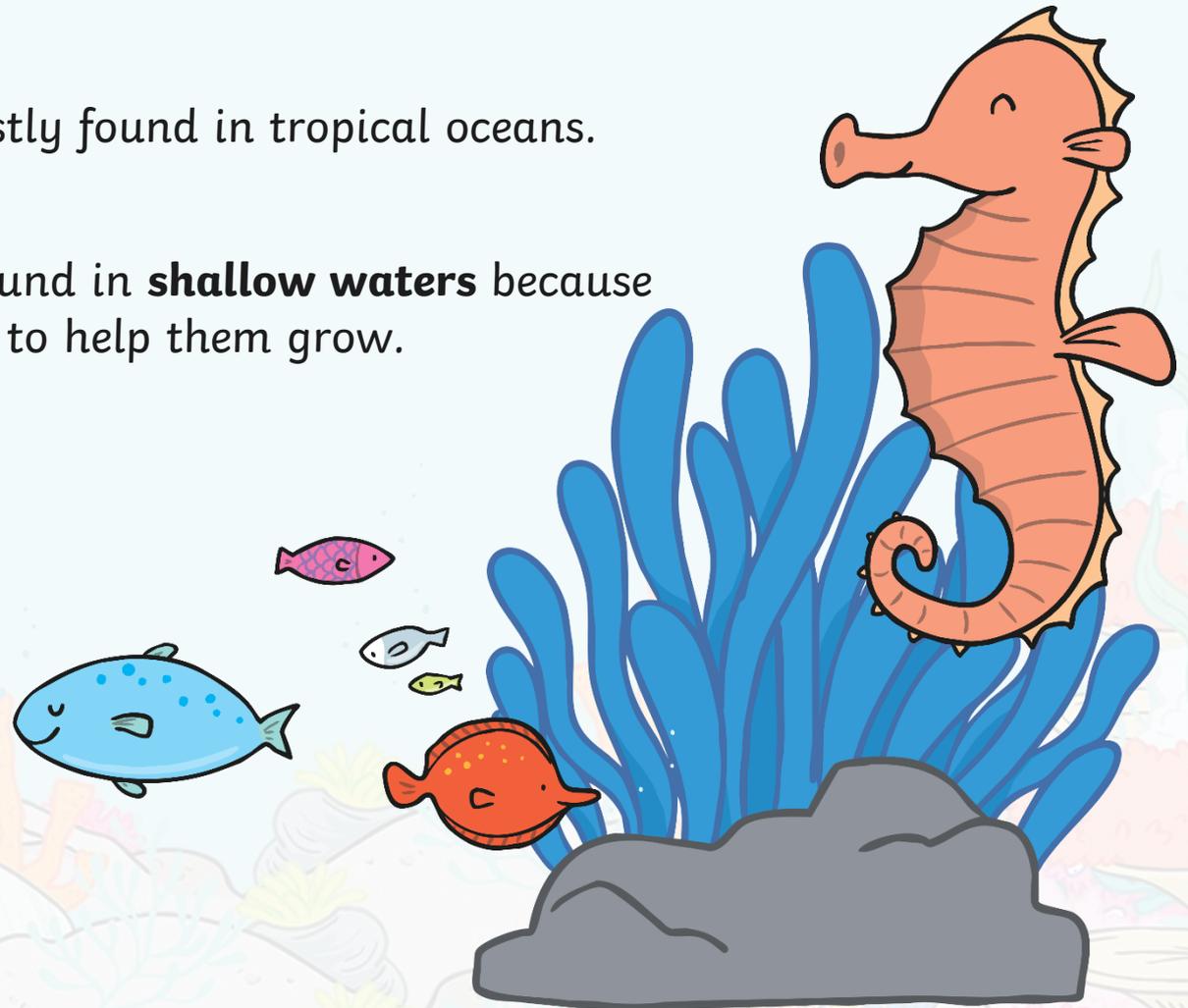
They can be many colours, including yellow, red, pink, green, blue, orange and purple.



What Is a Coral Reef?

Coral reefs are mostly found in tropical oceans.

They are mostly found in **shallow waters** because they need sunlight to help them grow.



Coral Reef Fun Facts!

- A group of corals is called a **colony**.
- Coral reefs are home to millions of different types of creatures! These include fish, lobsters, clams, octopuses, seahorses and sea turtles.
- Coral reefs feed at night-time. They have small **stinging tentacles** which they use to catch their prey.
- The oldest living coral reef was over 4000 years old!
- Corals are used in many different medicines.

The Great Barrier Reef

The **Great Barrier Reef** is the largest coral reef in the world.

It is in the **Coral Sea**, off the coast of **Queensland in Australia**.

It is more than 1600 miles long and can be seen from space!



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Where Is the Great Barrier Reef?

United Kingdom



The Great Barrier Reef

Where Is the Great Barrier Reef?

Australia



The Great Barrier Reef

Threats to Coral Reefs

Large areas of the Great Barrier Reef are beginning to die.

Some of the coral is also losing its bright colour and turning white (this is called **bleaching**).

This is happening because the **oceans** are getting warmer.



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Creatures living in a Coral Reef



Click on a creature to find out more about it.

Fish

There are many different types of bright and colourful fish that live in coral reefs.

They are bright because they can easily camouflage themselves against the colours of the coral.



hawk fish



lion fish



clown fish



angel fish



butterfly fish



Sea Snails

Sea snails can be found in nearly every ocean. They are often found in coral reefs where there is lots of food for them to eat.

Sea snails breathe through gills, like a fish. They stick themselves to surfaces in the ocean, such as rocks and plants. They might also bury themselves in the sand.

Some sea snails sleep during the day and are active at the night (they are nocturnal).



Starfish

Starfish cannot swim. They have hundreds of tiny feet on each of their arms, called **tube feet**.

Starfish like to eat tiny fish, clams, oysters, and snails. This means they are carnivores.

Starfish have two stomachs and five arms. They do not have a brain or any blood.

Starfish have tiny eyes on the end of each arm but they cannot see very well.



Seahorses

Seahorses are called 'seahorses' because their heads are shaped a bit like a tiny horse!

They swim upright in the seaweed and between other sea plants.

Seahorses are very good at camouflaging themselves. This helps them to hide from other creatures that may want to eat them. It also helps them to find their own food.



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Octopuses

Octopuses have two eyes. They have eight long legs called **tentacles**.

Octopuses are invertebrates. This means that they have no skeleton.

An octopus has a hard beak, a bit like a bird. They use this to break into their food, such as crabs and shellfish.

Octopuses have three hearts. They have very good eyesight and they are very clever.

An octopus can camouflage itself by changing its skin colour!



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Moray Eels

A moray eel is the largest type of eel.

Eels look a little like snakes but they are actually fish.

They like to live in caves and cracks in rocks on the bottom of the sea.

Moray eels eat meat, such as fish, octopuses, squid and crabs.

Moray eels have large eyes but they do not see very well.



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Crabs

Crabs have 10 legs. The first pair of legs are used as claws.

Crabs have their skeleton on the outside of their bodies. This is called their shell.

Crabs eat meat and plants.

Crabs swim and walk sideways. They breathe with the help of gills.



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