

Name: _____

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Grade 8 Reading Comprehension Worksheet

MARINE FUNGI

From Discover Science Series
Oceans

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Beneath the ocean floor lives a largely unstudied community of microbial life that scientists have dubbed the 'dark biosphere' and are now only just beginning to explore. One type of life that researchers are particularly excited about is ancient marine fungi because of its genetic variety and potential for developing new medicines and drugs.

"Fungi can produce interesting natural compounds, some of which are antibiotics," says microbiologist William Orsi of the Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts. "Deep biosphere fungi are an untapped resource by the pharmaceutical industry."

Orsi has analyzed sediment from as deep as 127m beneath the sea floor, retrieved from ocean basins around the world.

There he has discovered a diverse fungi community living in the mud, some of which is 2.7 million years old.

The oldest fungi living in the sediment of the Pacific Ocean has been found to correlate closely with the amount of organic carbon sediments present, which indicates their role in carbon recycling in the sub-surface ecosystem.

That's not so surprising if you consider that some fungi species have the natural ability to break down industrial toxins, and even crude oil components that have been released into the ocean. Not all seafaring fungi is so eco-friendly, however. For instance, the fungus known to cause dandruff and eczema in humans has been found throughout the ocean, but largely favours coral reefs where it has been implicated in disease and ecological decline.



Answer the questions.

1. What is the main idea of the passage?
2. Explain what you learned.
3. Underline the most important information in each paragraph.
4. Write a summary. Tell what is most important.

Grade 8 Comprehension

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Grade 8 Comprehension:

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