A Raft of Volcanic Stone Could Save the Great Barrier Reef

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There is a mass of solid lava drifting right for Australia and it could help the Great Barrier Reef which is at risk of vanishing. Sailors said they spotted the stone raft among the Pacific waves. Some other sailors spotted smoke coming up from a volcanic island. Did something erupt? Is the raft a result of that? Yes—such stone rafts take shape when an underwater volcano erupts. When the volcano explodes, it expels chunks of lava that are chock-full of holes. These holes help the lava chunks stay atop the waves. Because of its size, this stone raft could be a risk to ships and other vessels. However, it could also be a good thing for the Great Barrier Reef. Or it could make things much worse.

Using a photo, along with the sailors' reports, experts concluded the stone raft came from an

underwater volcano. The tip of that volcano is about 130 feet below the water. The stone raft, which is about the size of Manhattan, has drifted southwest and broken up a bit. However, it is still on a path for Australia and the Great Barrier Reef.

This might be good news for the Great Barrier Reef, which had a mass bleaching event in 2016 and 2017. Half of its corals were killed as a result. How? Bleaching happens when water becomes too hot. This causes the corals to remove the algae living inside of them. The corals turn white and die. This is where the stone raft comes in. When it collides into the corals, it could bring along lots of pals, such as barnacles. On the other hand, the stone raft could bring with it animals that could injure the corals. This would be a bad thing, but experts hope this will not be the case.

As the raft makes its way to the Land Down Under, the world will have to wait and see if it and its many pals will be able to save the Great Barrier Reef.

Teacher Resources

Please note: this non-controlled readable text passage features a ***description text structure***. As such, it is written to be ***at least 80% decodable at Substep 4.2***. A specific decodability score is listed below.

- This text passage is 80.97% decodable at Substep 4.2

Text Easability Scores

If you would like to measure the text easability scores of this passage, please follow the directions below.

1. Visit the Coh-Metrix Text Easability Assessor website at *http://tea.cohmetrix.com/*. If you do not already have a login and password, create one. It is free and easy to sign up for access to the website.
2. Once you have created an account and sign in, you will be taken to a page with an empty, white text box. Copy and paste the text from this passage into the empty, white text box. Make sure you are only copying and pasting the body of the passage. Do not include the title, date, or any of the resources present in the passage.
3. When you have pasted the passage into the text box, click on the red button beneath the text box that says "Analyze." There will be a short delay and after a few seconds, you will see a bar graph appear to the right of the screen.
4. The bar graph will give you the percentages for several text characteristics including: narrativity, syntactic simplicity, word concreteness, referential cohesion, and deep cohesion.
5. Below the bar graph, the Flesch Kincaid Grade Level is also included for your benefit.
6. Lastly, a paragraph is provided that explains the meaning of the measurements of the text characteristics for your particular passage.
7. Once you have completed measuring your passage, you can click on the "Clear" button below the text box and measure another passage, if you wish.

This text passage is archived under *Environment*.

