

## Scuba students

It is a beautiful day on the Great Barrier Reef. The sun is shining and the water is warm. The coral reef is beautiful. It is red, purple and orange. Fish swim in and out of it.

Ben Harrison is swimming beside the reef. Ben is nineteen years old. He is a scuba diving student. He is doing a five-day scuba diving course. Eight students are doing the course. Ben loves scuba diving.

*It is beautiful down here, Ben thinks. He is seven metres below the surface. And I don't have to go up to the surface to breathe. The fish and I – we can breathe underwater.*

Ben breathes in and out, in and out. He breathes through his regulator. He hears the air go through his regulator. He sees bubbles of air go past his mask. He looks up. The bubbles go up to the surface.

*Keep breathing, Ben thinks. Scuba divers must always keep breathing. Rudy, Ben's scuba teacher, says it to the students again and again: 'Keep breathing!'*

Ben stops and looks at an orange and white fish. It's a clown fish. *Hello, fish, he thinks. Your home is beautiful.*

Scuba divers can stop and float in one place underwater. They wear a BCD – a buoyancy control device. BCDs have air in them and they help the divers to float.

Ben sees his teacher Rudy. Rudy is swimming with two students, Noriko and Yoshi. They are from Japan. Rudy is giving them a lesson. They have to take off their masks underwater and put them on again. Noriko takes off her mask and puts it on again. Yoshi does it too.



Ben looks down. He sees two green turtles. And a diver is swimming behind the turtles. Ben thinks, *Who is that? It's Karl! He's not swimming with me – again!*

Karl is Ben's diving buddy. Scuba divers must always swim with their buddies. Rudy, the teacher, says it again and again: 'You must swim with your buddy.'

The other six students are here with friends. But Ben and Karl do not have friends here. Ben has to be Karl's buddy. But Karl isn't a good buddy. He doesn't swim with Ben. He doesn't listen to Rudy.

Now Ben swims to Karl. He wants to shout at Karl, but he can't. Divers can't talk underwater. They have to signal with their hands.

Ben sees Rudy. Rudy signals: *Go up*. It is time to go up to the surface. Ben signals to Rudy: *Okay*. Ben must also signal to his buddy. But his buddy isn't there!

Ben thinks, *I can't go up without my buddy. Where is he now?* He looks up and down. He looks left and right. He can't see Karl. Then he looks behind – and Karl is there.

Ben signals to Karl: *Go up?* Karl signals to Ben: *Yes, go up*. They signal: *Okay*.

Ben looks up. Scuba divers must look up before they swim to the surface. He swims up. Three metres below the surface the divers must stop. It's the safety stop. Ben can see seven divers doing safety stops. Rudy and six students are floating three metres below the surface.

*Karl and I have to stop now*, Ben thinks. He looks for Karl. But Karl is not beside him.

*Oh, not again!* Ben thinks. *This is bad. Where is Karl?*  
Rudy signals to Ben: *Go up, now!*

## SCUBA HAND SIGNALS



Okay.



Go down.



Go up.



Go that way.



Take it easy, slow down.



I'm out of air.



Buddy breathe.