

For Creative Minds

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Cephalopods

Animals like fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals all have backbones and are called vertebrates. Animals that do not have backbones are invertebrates. Insects and mollusks are invertebrates. There are almost 100,000 different kinds of mollusks, including snails and slugs. Some marine mollusks you might recognize are clams, oysters, and scallops.

Octopuses and squids belong to a group of marine mollusks called cephalopods which means “head-foot.” Their arms attach straight to their heads! Other cephalopods include cuttlefish and nautilus.

Octopuses have eight arms. Squids and cuttlefishes have a combination of ten arms and tentacles. Nautilus have up to 90 arms that don’t have suckers but do have sticky grooves to grab prey.



Fun Facts

Both octopuses and squids eat meat (carnivores). They grab prey with their arms (or tentacles). They use their suction cups to see if the animal tastes like something they should eat or not. If so, they carry the prey towards their mouth and use their strong beaks to tear meat into small pieces to eat.

Octopuses prey on crabs, lobsters, snails, and other shellfish.

Squids prey on fish and shrimp.

Squid beaks are so strong, they are sometimes found undigested inside the stomachs of their predators.



Octopuses and squids have 3 hearts and blue blood. They breathe oxygen from the water through gills.

Octopuses and squids can regrow an arm (but not a tentacle) if they lose one.

Some types of squids can swim as fast as 25 miles (40 km) per hour in short bursts.

Compared to its body size, a squid's eye is very large. A giant squid's eyes are about the size of a soccer ball!

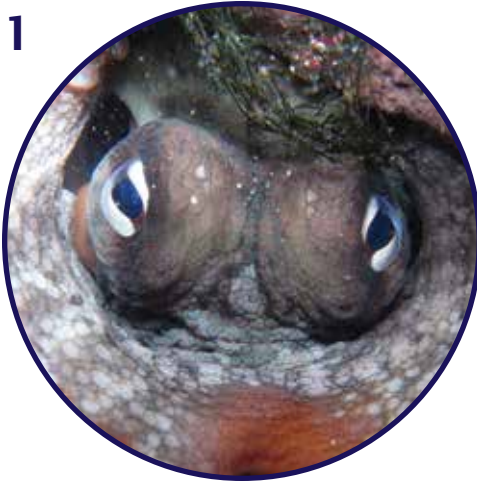


Octopuses are extremely smart. They have been known to “break out” of their exhibits at zoos or aquariums and wander around. Because they don't have any bones, they can squeeze through small holes and can use their suction cups to climb up or down.

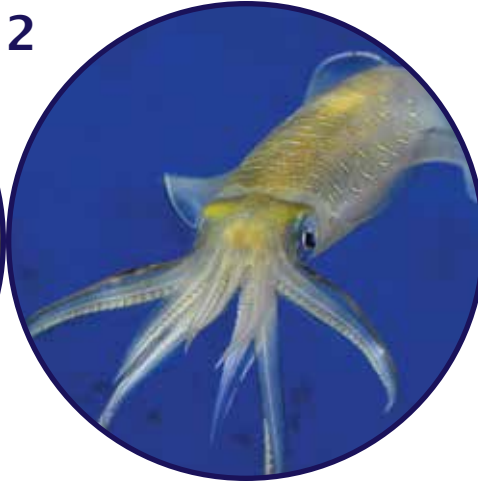
Some zoos or aquariums put carpeting or AstroTurf around octopus exhibits because the suction cups can't hold onto that material to get out!

Who Am I?

Using information learned in the book, see if you can identify which animal is which.



I have rectangular pupils.



I have eight arms and two tentacles.



I push water out of my siphon to help me swim.



I live in saltwater in warm or temperate climates.



I sometimes walk on my arms. I can also hold onto and move things with my arms. I can even move shells and rocks around to make a den.



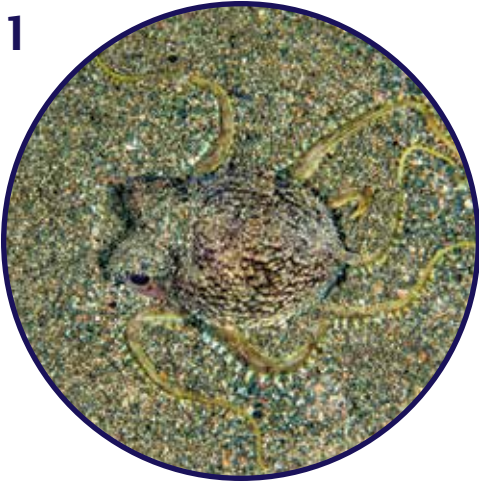
I may live in large groups.

Octopus: 1-rectangular pupils, 5-arms
Squid: 2-8 arms & 2 tentacles, 6-large groups
Both: 3-siphon, 4-saltwater habitat

Match the Adaptations

Match the photograph to its description.

1



A

Both octopuses and squids release dark ink clouds to confuse would-be predators. The ink prevents the predators from seeing them swim away.

2



B

Both octopuses and squids change the color and texture of their skins to camouflage themselves. This helps to keep them safe from predators. It also helps them hide from the prey they want to catch to eat.

3



C

Squids have long mantles with fins that help move them through the water.

1-B; 2-C, 3-A