

Discover Ocean Invertebrates

Chaperone-Led Field Investigation



Dear Chaperone,

Please guide your students through the following observations. As you ask them the following questions allow them to think about their answers and encourage them to come up with questions of their own. The purpose of this activity is not for them to get all the “right” answers but rather to allow them to practice questioning and observation skills.

Find a sea star. What color is it?

*Sea stars that live in the Puget Sound can be orange, purple, brown, white, yellow, red and even pink! Do they all have five arms, or do some sea stars have more? Visit the **Marine Discovery Center** to get a chance to touch some sea stars.*

What is the sea star holding on to?

*Sea stars can hold on to rocks, seaweed or the aquarium tank itself! They have sticky suction cups on the underside of their bodies that help them to hold on. These suction cups are called **tube feet**.*

Find a jellyfish. Do you think a jellyfish is most like a sea star, a sea urchin or a sea anemone?

Jellies are related to sea anemones. They both have a ring of stinging tentacles that surround a mouth in the center. They use their tentacles to catch their food. They are also both squishy!

Find an animal that has a shell. How does the shell help them to survive in the ocean?

Crab, hermit crab, snail, shrimp, barnacle, mussel, clam. Shells protect them from some predators. However many predators are strong enough to crush a shell.

Find an invertebrate that is stuck in one place and has a shell that is shaped like a volcano.

Barnacles stick to rocks, shells, docks, boats and even whales. Once they are stuck they build a hard shell around their bodies for protection. They live their whole lives on one place. They use their legs to eat plankton (tiny animals and plants) in the water. Their legs look like feathers or eyelashes.

Can you find an octopus? You might have to look very hard! What color is it?

Octopuses (or octopi) are very good at hiding. They can change color to blend in to the rocks. When a giant Pacific octopus is resting it can turn almost completely white. When it is active it will be dark orange or red. Octopuses have a sharp beak in their mouth that helps them to eat animals with hard shells.

Which invertebrate did you see today that you think is the most interesting?

Here is a list of invertebrates that your students might have seen today: sea stars, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, sand dollars, barnacles, crabs, shrimp, octopuses, snails, clams, scallops, mussels, chitons (pronounced KIE-tons), sea anemones, jellies (jellyfish), sea pens, coral and worms!