



Word of the Day: Invertebrate

Animal classification is when we group together animals that share similar traits into different categories. Classification helps scientists understand how different animals are related to each other. It is important for veterinarians to know the specific characteristics that define different groups of animals.

The animals we call **invertebrates** do not have a backbone. Almost 97% of species on earth are invertebrates! Insects, jellyfish, snails, and worms are all different types of invertebrates.

Discussion Question

- What is your favorite invertebrate?

Examples of Invertebrates



Bumblebee



Butterfly



Spider



Earthworm



Snail



Jellyfish



Crab



Starfish



Octopus

Different Types of Invertebrates

Invertebrates are an extremely diverse group of animals. They can be divided into many different, smaller groups. Here are a few of those smaller groups below:

Arthropods

Arthropods are a group of invertebrates that have a bony covering on their bodies called an **exoskeleton**. Below are four different types of arthropods.



Ladybug



Spider



Millipede



Hermit Crab

Insects

Includes all bugs, such as grasshoppers, crickets, butterflies, beetles, cockroaches, and flies.

Arachnids

Includes all spiders and scorpions.

Myriapods

Includes all centipedes and millipedes.

Crustaceans

Includes crabs, lobsters, and shrimp.

Annelids

Annelids are a group of invertebrates that includes ringed worms, such as earthworms and leeches.



Earthworm



Leech

Different Types of Invertebrates

Mollusks

Mollusks are a group of invertebrates that have soft bodies. Many mollusks also live inside a shell. Examples of mollusks include clams, oysters, snails, slugs, squids, and octopuses.



Clams



Snail



Squid



Octopus

Marine Invertebrates

There is an enormous number of invertebrates that live underwater. These marine invertebrates are divided into many smaller categories which includes groups such as starfish, jellyfish, and sea sponges.



Starfish



Jellyfish



Sea Sponge

Activities



PreK - Kindergarten

Invertebrate Dress-Up

Materials: butterfly wings, antenna headbands, spider legs, crab claws, octopus tentacles

- Dressing up is a fun way to learn more about animals! Your child can explore different invertebrates through costume play.
- Gather different costume items depending on the invertebrate you and your child are learning about. Insects, for example, have wings and antennae. Crabs and lobsters have hard shells and claws. Octopuses have tentacles with suckers that go down the entire length. Find out which invertebrates interest your child and go from there!

DIY Jellyfish

Materials: paper plate, coloring tools, googly eyes, scissors, string, glue

- Make your own jellyfish with this fun **Paper Plate Jellyfish Craft** activity!
- Let your child decorate a paper plate using color tools and other craft materials. Once finished, cut the plate in half.
- Cut pieces of ribbon for the jellyfish tentacles. Apply glue to the bottom half of the plate and have your child place the ribbons onto their jellyfish. Allow it to dry before hanging.

Activities



All Ages

Seashell Necklaces

Materials: seashells, string, thumbtack, (optional) beads

- Kids of all ages love seashells! A lot of seashells are from mollusks (clams, oysters, snails) that live in the water. You can collect seashells at the beach or purchase them either online or from a craft store.
- If you've collected the seashells yourselves, you'll need to help your child by drilling a hole in the shell itself. You can use an actual drill or, for small shells, use the pointed end of a thumbtack to make a hole big enough to pull string through.
- Let your child decorate their necklace with the seashells and beads!

Live Jellyfish Cam

Materials: wifi, computer or tablet

- There are lots of fun animal cams that kids of all ages can tune into!
- The Monterey Bay Aquarium has several different live cams. Check out their Jelly Cam or Moon Jelly Cam to watch these invertebrates as they move through the water!
- Visit the following link to explore:
<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>