

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# All About Squishy Squid

By Lydia Lukidis

Have you ever seen a squid before? Maybe you caught a glimpse of one of these squishy sea creatures on television or at the aquarium. You may have even seen one in the ocean on a family vacation! There's a lot of fascinating things to know about squid. Let's take a closer look together!

Squid belong to a group of ocean animals called "mollusks." Because squid do not have bones, their bodies are very soft. They are considered invertebrates, which are animals without a backbone. In fact, they do not even have vertebrae, which are the bones that make up your spine. Squid have a long tube-shaped body with a short head. They have eight arms and two tentacles. The tentacles are longer than the arms. There are 4 rows of suction cups on each tentacle. These help the squid catch their prey.



Squid live in both saltwater and fresh water. They like to live quite deep in the ocean. Some can be found more than 13,000 feet (3,962 meters) deep. But sometimes they like to swim in shallower waters, or even along the coast.

Squid are carnivores. That means they only eat meat. They eat lots of fish and shrimp. Sometimes they even eat smaller squid!

You might be surprised to know that squid do not live a very long life. No matter what their size or what they eat, the average lifespan of a squid is only about three to five years.

Scientists have discovered more than 300 types of squid. There could be as many as 200 more types that we still have to discover.

The biggest squid we know about is called the giant squid. It can grow up to 60 feet (18 meters) long and weigh more than 1,000 pounds. That's longer than a school bus! No wonder it's one of the biggest animals on the planet. Everything about the giant squid is giant, including its eyes which are the size of basketballs.



You might be scared if you saw a peculiar-looking squid while you were swimming in the ocean. However, squid are rather shy creatures, and they will certainly want to leave you alone. In fact, squid have more reasons to fear people than we have to fear them.

People capture squid and use them to make a popular dish called "calamari." Many restaurants serve it, and for this reason, fishing for squid has become a big business. If someone put a plate of fried squid in front of you, would you try some? You might be surprised how much you like it!

## About the Author



Lydia Lukidis is a published children's author with a multi-disciplinary background that spans the fields of literature, theater, and puppetry.

Lydia's picture book, *Gerbs in the House: The Dilly Dally Bedtime Routine*, is now available. Find out if Mocha will ever get his silly son to sleep!

Lukidis, Lydia. *Gerbs in the House: The Dilly Dally Bedtime Routine* ISBN: 978-0-9917402-7-7

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1. According to the information in the article, list two characteristics of a mollusk. Identify an animal mentioned in the article, besides the squid, that is also a mollusk.

Mollusk trait #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Mollusk trait #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Example of a mollusk (besides a squid): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Based on what you read in the article, an average squid might live...

a. four years

b. nine years

c. thirteen years

d. twenty years

3. Describe three features of the giant squid that were mentioned in the article.

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

#3: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is "calamari"?

a. a species of squid

b. a name for the squid's tentacles

c. a popular dish of fried squid

d. the name of the largest squid ever found

5. Would a squid be more likely to eat kelp or a small shark? How do you know?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. tentacles

a. see or notice briefly

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. discover

b. catch or take by force

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. peculiar

c. individual bones that make up the spine

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. mollusks

d. extremely interesting

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. capture

e. body parts used for grasping or feeling

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. carnivores

f. strange or unusual

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. glimpse

g. shoreline; where the land meets the sea

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. vertebrae

h. find; learn about; uncover during a search

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. fascinating

i. animals that eat other animals

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. coast

j. a group of animals that includes snails, clams, and squids

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In the article, "All About Squishy Squid," you learned that scientists have identified around 300 types of squid. You also learned that there could be as many as 200 types of squid that scientists haven't discovered yet.



On the lines below, describe why you think there might be so many species of squid that we still don't know about. Think about what you read in the article about where squids live and their different traits as you compose your answer.

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# ANSWER KEY

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1. According to the information in the article, list two characteristics of a mollusk. Identify an animal mentioned in the article, besides the squid, that is also a mollusk.

Mollusk trait #1: Mollusks have soft bodies.

Mollusk trait #2: Mollusks do not have vertebrae. (Mollusks do not have a backbone.)

Example of a mollusk (besides a squid): octopus

2. Based on what you read in the article, an average squid might live... a.

a. four years

b. nine years

c. thirteen years

d. twenty years

3. Describe three features of the giant squid that were mentioned in the article.

Accept any three of the following answers:

Giant squids can grow up to 60 feet (18 meters).

Giant squids can weigh more than 1,000 pounds.

Giant squids are one of the biggest animals on the planet.

Giant squids have eyeballs the size of basketballs.

4. What is "calamari"? c.

a. a species of squid

b. a name for the squid's tentacles

c. a popular dish of fried squid

d. the name of the largest squid ever found

5. Would a squid be more likely to eat kelp or a small shark? How do you know?

A squid would be more likely to eat a small shark because squid are carnivores.

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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>e.</b> 1. tentacles   | <b>a.</b> see or notice briefly                                      |
| <b>h.</b> 2. discover    | <b>b.</b> catch or take by force                                     |
| <b>f.</b> 3. peculiar    | <b>c.</b> individual bones that make up the spine                    |
| <b>j.</b> 4. mollusks    | <b>d.</b> extremely interesting                                      |
| <b>b.</b> 5. capture     | <b>e.</b> body parts used for grasping or feeling                    |
| <b>i.</b> 6. carnivores  | <b>f.</b> strange or unusual   |
| <b>a.</b> 7. glimpse     | <b>g.</b> shoreline; where the land meets the sea                    |
| <b>c.</b> 8. vertebrae   | <b>h.</b> find; learn about; uncover during a search                 |
| <b>d.</b> 9. fascinating | <b>i.</b> animals that eat other animals                             |
| <b>g.</b> 10. coast      | <b>j.</b> a group of animals that includes snails, clams, and squids |