

LEVELED BOOK • 0

You're a Jellyfish!



Written by Kira Freed • Illustrated by Cende Hill

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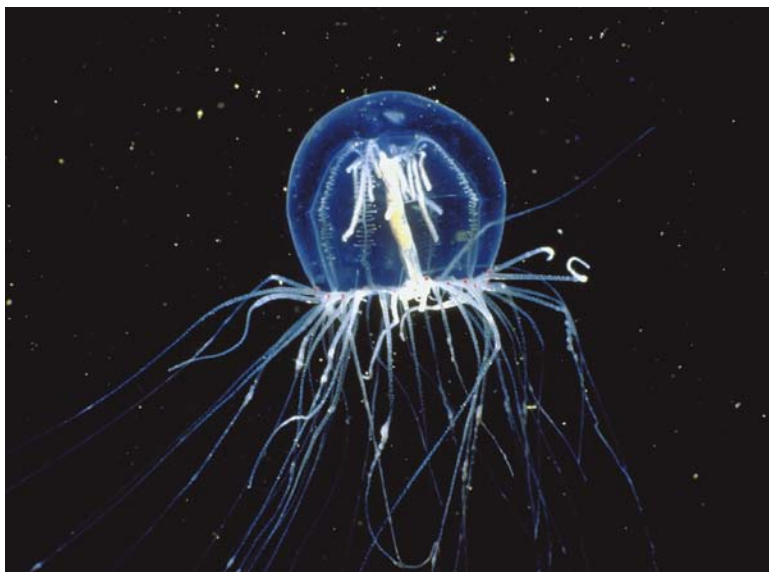


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This is a lion's mane jellyfish.

Floating at Sea

Imagine that your body is shaped like a bell, and you have long **tentacles** streaming down under you. You are mostly made of water and cannot survive away from it. You live in the ocean and travel by floating gracefully on **currents**.

You're a jellyfish, or jelly, and not a fish at all. You're a kind of **invertebrate**—an animal that has no backbone.

You and your jellyfish cousins live in every ocean in the world. Some also live in lakes and ponds. Some live in warm water, and others prefer cold water. Some of your cousins are survivors—they've been around for 650 million years, since long before the time of dinosaurs.

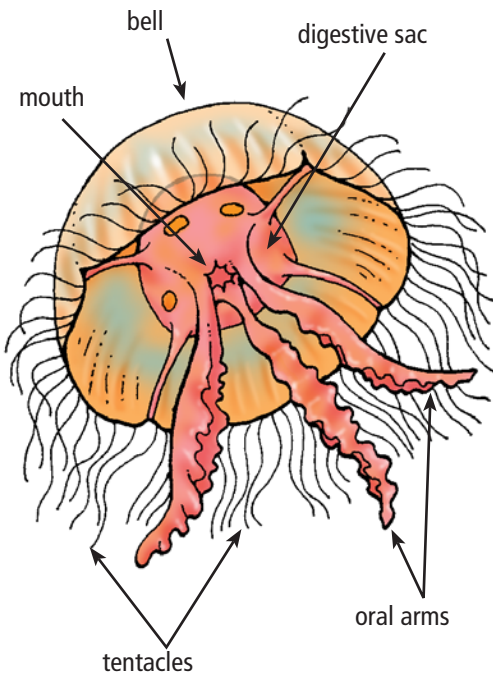


These West Coast sea nettles look like a fleet of spaceships.

Jelly Bodies

Like all jellyfish, you have no brain, heart, blood, or bones. Your body is made of water, muscles, and nerves. You use your eyespots and nerve network to sense up and down, light and dark, and the world around you.

The main part of your body is your bell. Tentacles hang from around your edges like fringe.



A mouth and digestive sac hang in the center. Some of your cousins have frilly oral arms, or mouth arms, around this sac.



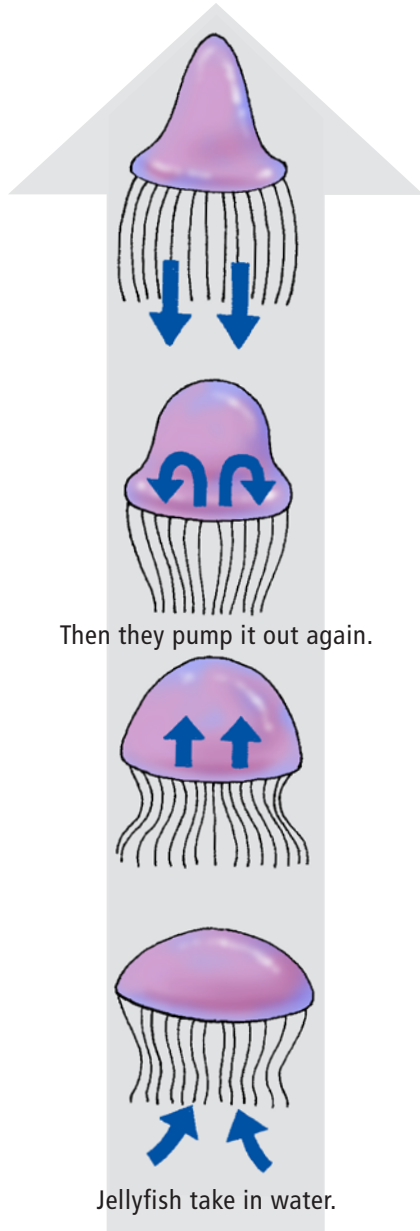
Do You Know?

The smallest jellyfish is as tiny as a pearl. The largest jellyfish is the lion's mane jellyfish. Its bell is wider than the length of a bed. Its tentacles can be as long as a school bus!

You and your cousins come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. Jellyfish that live near the ocean's surface are often clear, or see-through. Jellies that live deep in the ocean may be red or purple. Some jellies are white with splashes of color. Some deep-sea jellyfish even glow in the dark!

Getting Around

As a jellyfish, you spend most of your time drifting on ocean currents. But you can also move when you want to. First you let your bell fill with water. Then you squeeze the muscles in your bell the way a person blows a bubble with bubble gum. As you force water out of your bell, you shoot forward.



Some of your jellyfish cousins swim close to the ocean's surface to **bask** in sunlight. Others avoid light and stay deeper in the ocean. Some live in the open ocean, while others stay closer to shore.

Like all jellyfish, you are not a **social** animal. But divers and scientists often find your kind in large groups. You and the other jellies aren't enjoying each other's company. You just happen to be in the same place at the same time.

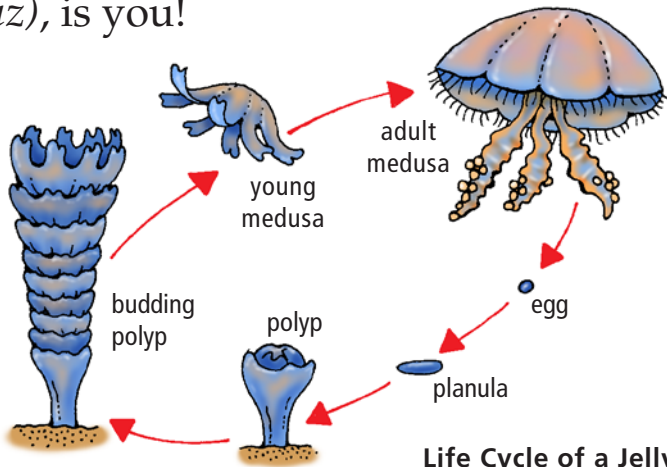


The moon jellyfish is one of the almost 200 kinds of jellyfish.

Life Cycle

You began your jellyfish life as an egg released into water by your mom. After your dad fertilized the egg, it grew into a tiny wormlike animal called a **planula** (*PLAN-yoo-luh*). The planula floated in water for a few weeks. Then it attached to a rock and developed into a **polyp** (*PAHL-ip*).

Over time, the polyp **cloned** itself through a process called **budding**. It grew disks that popped off, swam away, and developed into adult jellyfish. One of those adults, or **medusas** (*muh-DOO-suz*), is you!



Life Cycle of a Jellyfish



Hunter and Hunted

Like other jellyfish, you like to eat fish, crabs, shrimp, and tiny **marine** animals. The key to successful hunting is the stinging cells in your tentacles. You catch prey as it floats through the water. Some of your cousins also have a glow that attracts fish. Others have a sticky gel that catches animals passing by.

Do You Know?

One kind of jellyfish grows its own food. The upside-down jellyfish lies on the bottom of shallow warm oceans. It eats algae and then grows more just by sitting in the sunlight.

Many animals avoid eating you and your cousins. After all, who wants a mouthful of stinging cells? But some animals don't seem to mind at all. Sea turtles and some fish and birds think of jellyfish as a real treat. You try hard to protect yourself from being eaten by hiding or by stinging. Still, many of your cousins are eaten while they are still growing or as adults.



Jellyfish are the main food of leatherback sea turtles.

Australian sea wasp



Do You Know?

A jellyfish called the Australian sea wasp is one of the most poisonous animals in the world. A sting can kill a person in three minutes.

People and Jellyfish

People often see your jellyfish cousins on beaches. Sadly, those jellies are either dead or dying. People need to remember to *never touch a jellyfish!* Even a dead jelly can sting.

Most of your jellyfish cousins have a mild sting that is painful and causes a red rash. But the sting of some jellies can be deadly.

Jellyfish Stings

Symptoms:

- Intense stinging pain
- Red rash
- Swollen, raised patches of skin
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- Fever, chills, and sweating
- Back and abdominal pain

Treatment:

- Rinse with seawater (not fresh water).
- Don't rub the wound or apply ice.
- Apply white vinegar to the wound.
- Remove tentacles using gloves, a heavy cloth, or tweezers.
- Stay as still as possible to keep the poison from spreading.
- See a doctor right away in case of breathing problems, severe pain, or other intense symptoms.





Big Red, discovered in 2003, has oral arms but no tentacles.

Conclusion

Scientists learn new facts about jellyfish every year. They also often discover new kinds of jellies. In 2003, a large red jellyfish that has no tentacles was discovered off the coast of California.

People enjoy looking at jellyfish at zoos or aquariums. Watching you gently float through water is fun and relaxing. Even without brains, your cousins must be pretty smart to have survived for millions of years!

Glossary

bask (<i>v.</i>)	to rest and soak up sunlight (p. 9)
budding (<i>n.</i>)	reproducing by growing a bud that breaks off (p. 10)
cloned (<i>v.</i>)	duplicated (p. 10)
currents (<i>n.</i>)	steady-moving water that flows in a single direction (p. 4)
invertebrate (<i>n.</i>)	a kind of animal without a backbone (p. 4)
marine (<i>adj.</i>)	found in the ocean (p. 11)
medusas (<i>n.</i>)	adult jellyfish (p. 10)
planula (<i>n.</i>)	the larva of a jellyfish (p. 10)
polyp (<i>n.</i>)	a tentacled, tubelike creature attached to a solid surface; a stage in the life cycle of a jellyfish (p. 10)
social (<i>adj.</i>)	friendly; enjoying the company of others (p. 9)
tentacles (<i>n.</i>)	thin limbs on an animal, especially an invertebrate (p. 4)

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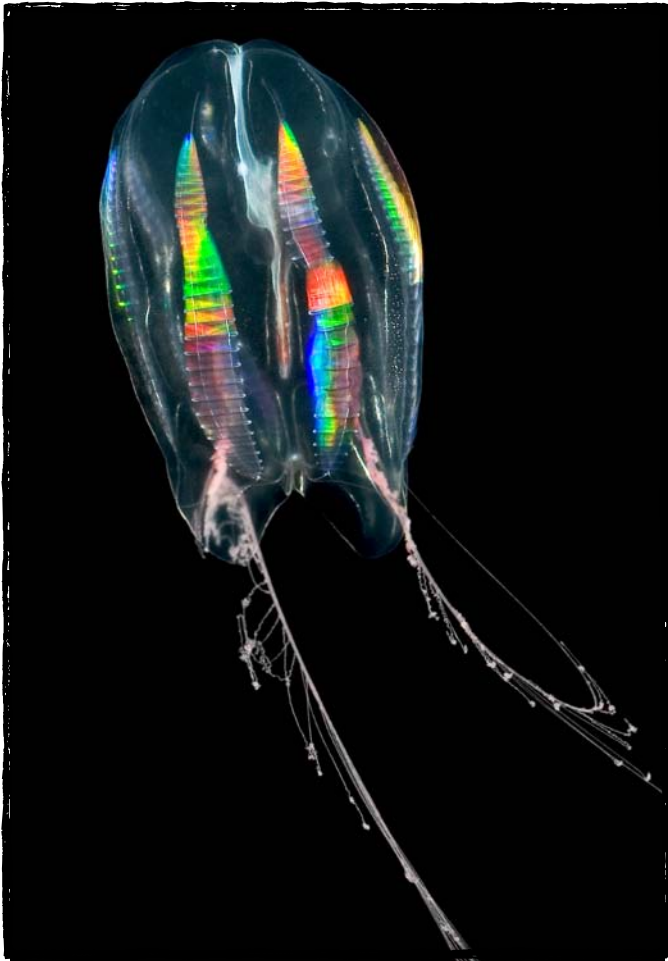
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