

Mollusk Adaptations

Procedure

Explain to students that all animals, including mollusks, have adaptations, or characteristics that help them survive in their environments. Some of these adaptations are actual structures on the animal, which we call **structural adaptations**. Another kind of adaptation is a **behavioral adaptation**, which is a behavior the animal exhibits that helps it survive.

As you read *Next Time You See a Seashell* aloud, have students signal (touch their nose, raise their hand) when they hear about a mollusk adaptation. Stop to discuss each adaptation and whether it is a structural adaptation or behavioral adaptation. After reading, have students fill in the Mollusk Adaptations T-Chart. Then, have them choose one of the structural adaptations listed in the t-chart and explain how it helps a mollusk survive. Next, they should choose a behavioral adaptation from the t-chart and explain how it helps a mollusk survive. For example, a hard shell is a structural adaptation that protects the animal from predators and burying in the sand is a behavioral adaptation that makes it difficult for predators to find them.

For more examples of structural and behavioral adaptations of mollusks, watch the videos of live mollusks moving, burying, and eating at http://shellmuseum.org/education/mollusks_video.cfm. The full DVD from this site called *The Secret Lives of Seashells* contains 30 minutes of footage of live mollusks along with explanations of the structures and behaviors that allow them to eat, move, defend themselves, and reproduce.

Framework for K-12 Science Education Connections

Life Science 1.A: Structure and Function

By the end of grade 2. All organisms have external parts. Different animals use their body parts in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place, and seek, find, and take in food, water and air. Plants also have different parts (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) that help them survive, grow, and produce more plants.

By the end of grade 5. Plants and animals have both internal and external structures that serve various functions in growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction.

Mollusk Adaptations T-Chart

Structural Adaptations	Behavioral Adaptations
Shell	Retreating inside the shell when startled
Egg case	Laying eggs inside a case to protect babies
Colors, patterns, and shapes that help them blend in	Pushing out a stream of water to propel away from danger
	Burying in the sand to hide from predators

Name _____

Mollusk Adaptations T-Chart

In the t-chart below, list some structural and behavioral adaptations of mollusks featured in *Next Time You See a Seashell*.

Structural Adaptations	Behavioral Adaptations

Choose one of the structural adaptations listed in your T-chart and explain how it helps a mollusk survive. Then choose a behavioral adaptation from the T-chart and explain how it helps a mollusk survive.
