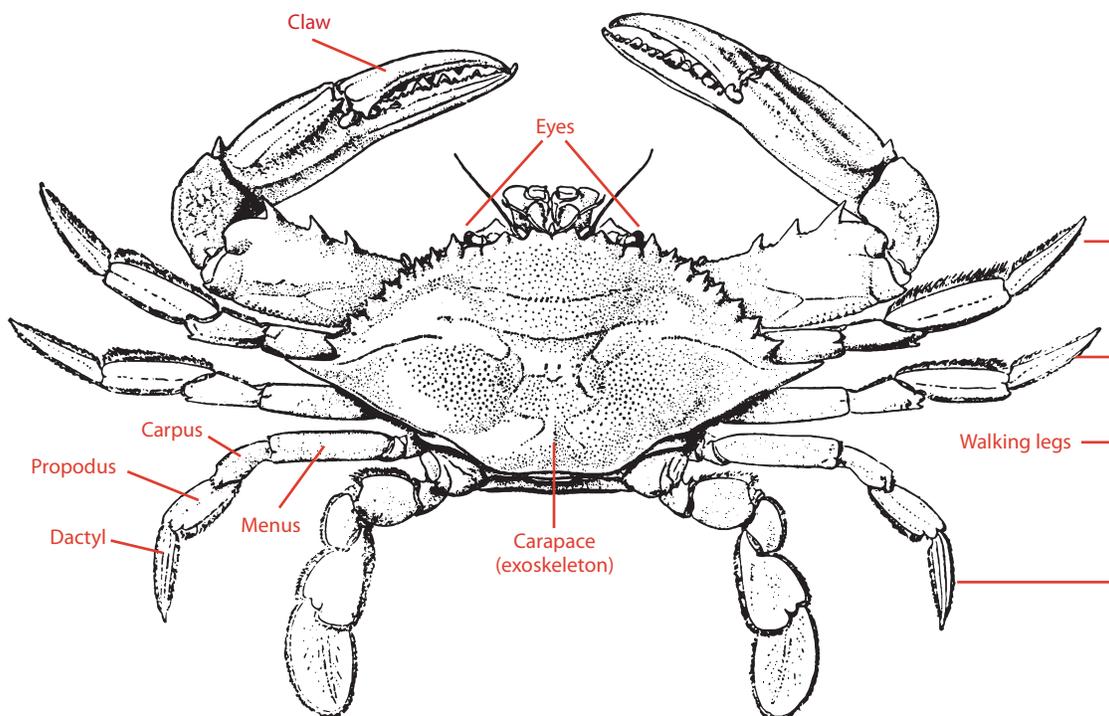


Background Info

Arthropods may be the most widespread group of creatures in the animal kingdom as well as having the greatest number of species. Marine arthropods include barnacles, isopods, amphipods, shrimps, and crabs. All members of this large group, phylum Arthropoda, have “jointed limbs” and an exoskeleton, or a skeleton that covers their body like armor.

Crabs come in many shapes and sizes, but they have a few things in common (usually). Ten jointed legs make them decapods, and their eyes are found on the ends of short stalks. When they grow, the species that have hard exoskeletons molt their old shells! Crabs can be found both in water and on land because they breathe through gills, which just have to stay moist while the crabs are on land.

- **Claws:** claws can be used for both protection and foraging.
- **Legs:** typically used to move laterally (side to side), crabs are able to still walk despite losing a leg.
- **Eyes:** crabs use their eyes as one way to find food and avoid predators.
- **Carapace or exoskeleton:** the exoskeleton of crabs are shed multiple times over their lifetime in a process known as molting. A new, soft exoskeleton is always being formed under the hard, visible one. The new exoskeleton is sometimes up to 1/3 larger after molting and the crabs are vulnerable during the hardening phase of the molt.



ACTIVITY

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- modeling clay
- pipe cleaners (cut in half)
- craft supplies you have available
- your imagination



Instructions

1. Learn the body parts of a crab. The **carapace** covers the body of the crab. Crabs need to molt their **exoskeleton** as they grow bigger. Crabs have **jointed legs** and **claws**. Crabs have 2 **eyes** to find food and avoid predators.
2. Make your own body into a crab. Walk around using your **jointed** legs. Put your arms out like **claws** to defend yourself.
3. Now that you're familiar with crabs, let's make one! Roll a ball of modeling clay (about the size of a golf ball).
4. Flatten out the top and bottom of the ball of clay. This will make it look more like the crab's **carapace**.
5. Bend 8 pipe cleaners (or any craft supplies you may have) to make the crab's **jointed legs**.
6. Bend the ends of 2 other pipe cleaners to make the crab's **claws**.
7. Add the pipe cleaners to your flattened clay ball.
8. Use your imagination to make **eyes** for your crab.
9. Crabs like to hide under rocks. Can you make your crab scurry to the nearest hiding spot?