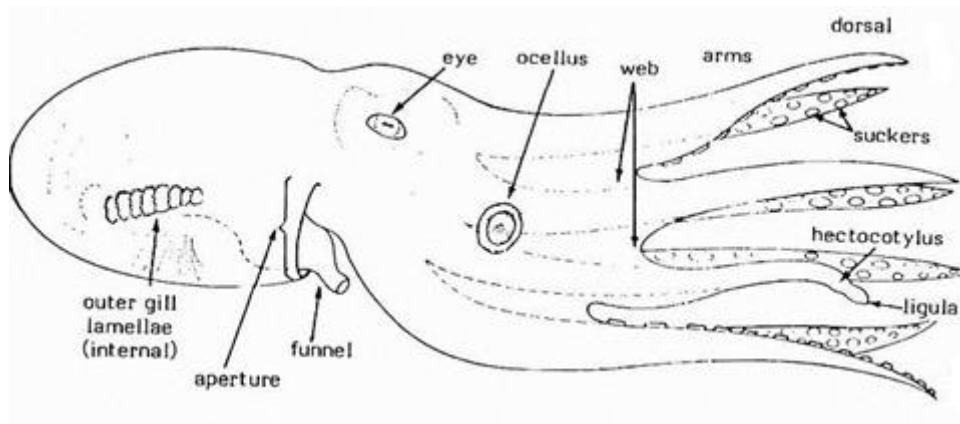


## OCTOPUS – An intelligent sea creature



**A**n Octopus is an invertebrate – which means that it does not have a backbone. It is a member of a group of animals called cephalopods, which are related to other molluscs such as oysters and mussels, but the octopus is special within this phylum of animals because it has no hard outer shell.

Octopuses have two eyes and a small bony beak inside their mouth which helps to crush its food. The octopus gets its name from its 8 tentacles or arms which are covered in suckers to help the animal catch its food. An octopus also has three hearts, two work to pump blood through the gills to collect oxygen from the water, and one heart pumps blood around its body to deliver the oxygen to the body cells. The octopus contains a chemical which makes their blood blue.

The lack of skeleton in this animal allows it to squeeze into tiny holes in coral reefs where it hides from its predators. Octopuses are also experts at camouflage and can change colour to match the colour of their surroundings. They can also squirt special ink into the water to distract its predators.

Octopus are known to be intelligent and can solve problems such as finding food in a science laboratory by squeezing their flexible bodies through small holes to find some hidden food.

There are more than 300 species of octopus and most are harmless to humans. Be careful though if you swim in Australian waters though because the Blue Ringed Octopus can be found there and they are known to have killed humans with their venom.



### **FABULOUS FACTS:**

**Type** – Invertebrate – Cephalopod

**Diet** – Fish, small turtles, shrimp, lobsters, crabs, and snails

**Unusual body parts** – three hearts

**Habitat** – Found close to the sea floor, hides in rocks and coral reefs.

**Status** – probably the most flexible of all sea creatures.

**Life span** – only 6 months (octopus die after they have reproduced).

**Did you know?** Octopuses began to evolve more than 400 million years ago.