

Invertebrate Key Terms

Aboral – on a two-sided invertebrate, the surface opposite the mouth.

Asexual reproduction - a type of reproduction where an organism replicates itself, by budding or dividing, without the involvement of other organisms.

Asymmetrical – lack of symmetry.

Benthic – bottom-dwelling

Bipectinate gill – a gill in which filaments occur on both sides of the gill axis.

Calcareous – containing calcium carbonate (a compound of calcium).

Carapace – shieldlike exoskeletal plate that covers at least part of the anterior dorsal surface of many arthropods.

Carrion - the carcass of a dead animal that becomes food for other scavenging animals.

Cheliped – a clawed appendage of decapod crustaceans.

Commensalism – a symbiotic relationship in which one species benefits from the relationship and the other species (host) is not harmed.

Detritus – tiny pieces of dead and decomposing plants and animals.

Dioecious – having separate sexes; some individuals contain the male reproductive system and other individuals contain the female system.

Ectoparasite – parasite that lives on the outside of its host.

Exoskeleton - an external supportive covering of an animal.

Flagellum (pl. flagella) – a long, whiplike appendage that aids in locomotion or feeding.

Gamete – a male or female reproductive cell.

Hermaphroditic – having both male and female reproductive systems in the same individual.

Mantle – a body wall fold that secretes a shell, as in molluscs.

Mantle cavity – protective chamber created by the overhang of a mantle.

Nematocysts – stinging cnida (eversible organelle) of cnidarians.

Operculum – a lid or covering to a chamber-like structure, as seen in marine snails.

Pelagic – living, floating, or swimming in the open ocean away from the ocean bottom.

Photoreceptors- light sensitive cells.

Plankton – free-floating, microscopic plants and animals.

Pleopods – frontal abdominal appendage.

Radula – a ribbonlike structure bearing rows of teeth found in the mouths of many molluscs; used for rasping and scraping.

Scavenger – an organism that feeds on carrion or any other suitable food it comes across.

Sedentary – not active.

Sessile – permanently attached to a substrate.

Substrate – the base on which an organism lives; can be rocks, coral, sand, or mud.

Symmetrical – having similar halves.

Symbiotic relationship – a physical relationship between two species in which at least one of the species is dependent, to various degrees, upon the other. Parasitism, commensalism, and mutualism are three types of symbiotic relationships.

Thoracic – relating to or located within the thorax, the middle part of a crustacean body.

Uropods – in some crustaceans, a flattened pair of appendages at the posterior end of the abdominal section.

Zooxanthellae - any of various symbiotic algae that live within the cells of other organisms, such as corals or anemones.