



# Invertebrates

Invertebrates are a type of animal that does not have a backbone. Mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, and birds all have backbones. There are many, many examples of vertebrates, yet they make up only a very small percentage of animal species. Over 96% of animals on Earth are actually invertebrates! Many invertebrates are aquatic. Sponges, corals, jellyfish, anemones, and starfish are all examples of invertebrates. So are mollusks, which have a soft body covered by an outer layer called a mantle. Some mollusks live in shells. Squid, snails, slugs, octopuses, and oysters are all mollusks. Crustaceans such as crab, shrimp, and lobster, are also invertebrates. Instead of a backbone, they have a hard outer shell that protects the softer parts of their bodies. So do insects, spiders, centipedes, and scorpions. Like crustaceans, these are all arthropods. The largest invertebrate is the colossal squid, which can get over 40 feet long and weigh over 1,000 pounds.

1. Invertebrates do not have \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. True or False: Mammals are invertebrates.
3. Which are there more of on Earth?  
A. vertebrates      B. invertebrates
4. What is the largest invertebrate? \_\_\_\_\_