

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## What Does an Otter Look Like?

Otters are sleek and fascinating creatures with unique features that make them perfect for life in the water. These mammals belong to the weasel family, and they come in a variety of sizes and colors depending on their species.

An otter's body is long and flexible, allowing it to twist and turn gracefully while swimming. Most otters are covered in dense, waterproof fur that ranges from dark brown to light tan, with a lighter-colored belly. Their fur is not just for looks—it keeps them warm in cold water and acts like a protective suit. Some species even have patterns or lighter spots on their throat or chest.

In terms of size, otters can vary widely. The smallest otter, the Asian small-clawed otter, is about the size of a cat and weighs around 5 to 10 pounds. On the other hand, the giant otter, found in South America, can grow up to six feet long and weigh over 70 pounds! Most other otters fall somewhere in between, typically measuring 2 to 4 feet in length.

Otters have a few body parts that make them stand out. Their webbed feet act like flippers, helping them paddle quickly through the water. They also have long, muscular tails that they use to steer and propel themselves forward. Their sharp claws help them grab food, while their whiskers are sensitive and help them detect movement underwater.

One of the most fascinating features of the sea otter is its ability to use tools. Sea otters have loose skin under their armpits where they can stash a favorite rock or a meal like a clam. These rocks are used to crack open shellfish, showing just how clever otters can be!

With their sleek bodies, webbed feet, and unique tools, otters are well-adapted to their aquatic habitats. Whether small or large, otters are always captivating creatures to watch.