



Dissection: Teaching Life or Teaching Death?

Dissection was introduced in the 1920s as a method for studying anatomy and biology because scientists and doctors realized they could better understand the pain and other conditions that animals endured if they knew the processes that were taking place internally.

The use of dissection in the classroom, particularly below the college level, causes disagreement among scientists, environmentalists, and educators. The main issue is respect for life. Animal rights activists argue that dissecting an animal devalues that animal's life and promotes the torturing and killing of innocent creatures. Additionally, removing a creature from its habitat takes away potential food for other creatures, which, over time, can severely disrupt the ecosystem. On the other side of the debate, some educators have noted that dissection teaches us to understand the inner workings of life and therefore gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the natural world and the need to protect it. The debate is even more complicated when you discuss the dissection of mammals versus other species. Most arguments against dissection center around mammals like mice, rabbits, and pigs, but people seem to be less squeamish about dissecting other species like squid, starfish, or worms.



What is your opinion?



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Squid Parts Chart

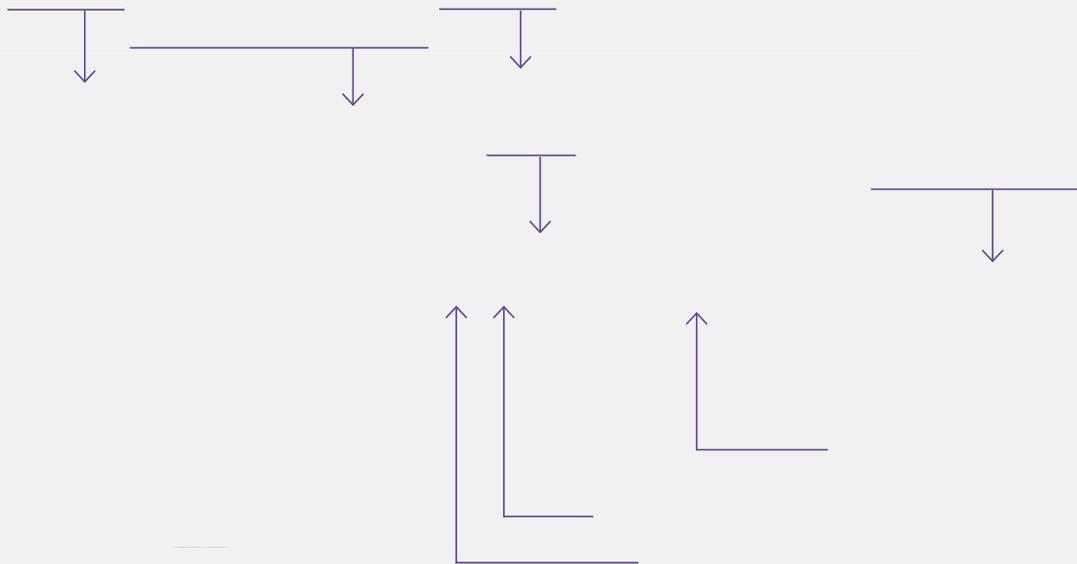
Body Part	Description	Function
Arms	Eight short limbs, each of which has two rows of suction cups on the lower side	Hold food while the squid bites it into digestible pieces
Beak and Mouth	Parrot-like beak on the mouth is surrounded by the bases of the arms and tentacles	Used for biting food into small pieces
Clubs	The ends of the tentacles with sharply toothed suckers	Used to obtain a firm grip on prey
Eyes	A squid's two eyes are incredibly large in proportion to its body	Helps squid to see and focus on light particles
Feeding tentacles	Two longer tentacles have toothed suckers near the tip	Used for obtaining prey
Fins	Two flaps on the mantle	Stabilizes squid during swimming
Head	Small part of the body between the mantle and the arms; contains the eyes, brain, and muscular buccal mass	Central processing unit of squid; muscular buccal mass also crushes food
Mantle	The large part of the squid in front of the head	Contains and protects the stomach, gills, ink sac, reproductive organs, and digestive organs
Siphon	Tube-like organ on the lower side of the head	Forcefully expels water, enabling the squid to propel itself through the sea



Squid Anatomy

Match it! Fill in the blanks using the following terms:

Arms, Beak and Mouth, Clubs, Eyes, Feeding Tentacles, Stabilizing Fins, Head, Mantle



Controversial topics like dissection cause a lot of argument. Now that you have dissected a squid, reflect on the experience by exploring your feelings, what you learned, or what you believe to be the benefits and disadvantages of dissection.

Squid Ink! Sign your name!

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Dolphin Anatomy

Match it!

Use this table to study the anatomy of dolphins. Then match the descriptions to label the parts in the diagram below.

Part of Dolphin	Function/Description
Blow Hole	Hole on the top of the head through which the dolphin breathes air (it is the dolphin's nostril)
Melon	The rounded structure in the top of the dolphin's head just in front of the blow hole
Rostrum	Elongated part of the mouth and jaws
Eye	Sight organs located on the head
Ear	Hearing organs located on the head behind the eye
Pectoral Fin	One pair of wide, flat forelimbs that contain bone structure similar to a human hand and are used for steering.
Tail Fluke	One half of the tail
Median Notch	Indentation between the two flukes
Dorsal Fin	Fin on the upper side of the body

