Be An Ocean Biodiversity Detective! Worksheet

Name: _____

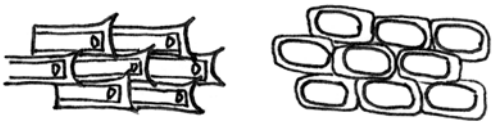
Many types of organisms live on such seashore objects as shells, plants, and driftwood. Here are clues for just a few of the animals you might discover:

Polychaetes (many bristles)

These are worms that create a shell-like tube to hide their bodies. **Look for spirals and long tubes made of calcium left behind by the worms.**

Bryozoa (moss animal)

These minute animals live in colonies. They form an “apartment building” for the colony that looks like a textured crust. Bryzoa are filter feeder. **Look for a patterned surface that looks like a grid.**



Barnacles

These animals are arthropods and crustaceans. Barnacles have jointed legs used for feeding, antennae and a hard outer body shell made of calcium plates. Barnacles cement themselves on to rocks or other surfaces and filter food from the water. **Look for the outer shells or a round mark left by a barnacle that has been torn off.**

Encrusting red algae (Lithothamnium)

This algae is a protist, and organism with both plant and animal features. This is kind of algae looses its color when it is out of water, leaving behind its coral-like skeleton. **Look for a crust that looks like plaster, which sometimes has tiny "fingers."**

Boring sponge

This organism is an animal that creates holes in mollusk shells and coral where it hides from predators. **Look for a shell with tiny round holes.**

What other interesting clues can you find?

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Draw your specimen (inside and out) below. Turn your drawing into a diagram by pointing out the other organisms on board!

Examples of sandy beach specimens

Clam shell with polychaete worms, boring sponge holes, and bryozoa.

A black-lipped pearl oyster shell is the primary organism. The oyster shell is covered with polychaete worms, which in turn are covered by encrusting red algae.

Seashore specimens from left to right: drift wood with shipworm holes; sand dollar with polychaete worms and encrusting red algae containing a holdfast from an algae frond; mussel shell with seaweed holdfasts.

Barnacles and barnacle “scars”– where barnacles were once attached – on a moon snail shell.

Seashore specimen from left to right: slipper shell with boring sponge holes; barnacle encrusted reed; and barnacle-encrusted angel wing shell.

Eel grass with bryozoa and polychaete worms.

Baby oysters attached to a larger oyster shell.

Samples of Elementary school student's observation drawings