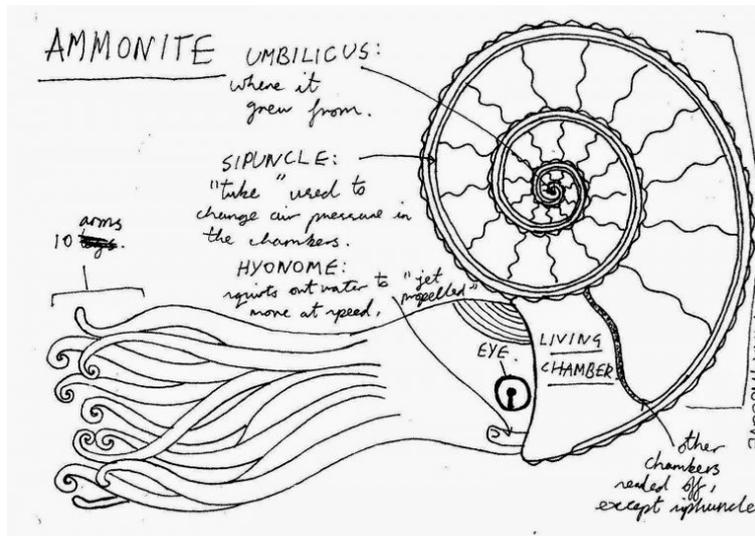


How did ammonites move?



Ages	Subject	Topics	Resources
7-11 years	Science Art & Design PE	Fossils	Film clip & worksheets from the activity pack

Ammonites are one of the most iconic fossils on the Jurassic Coast, but they hide secret mysteries inside their shell that tell us about how they lived. To begin, children use art and design to create artwork to show how the fossils might have looked like when they were alive. This leads onto a scientific investigation to explore how these ancient animals might have moved. Using a human and a fish skeleton as a comparator, children explore muscles and bones to discuss what they do and how they help us move. Using this understanding, children then examine the internal structure of ammonites and can recreate how they move in a PE lesson.



Teachers' Materials

A model of a human skeleton would enhance this activity where children explore the different parts of their body and what they do.

Practicalities

Although this activity can be delivered within the classroom using the worksheets provided, using a PE lesson to explore muscle movement and how ammonites swam through the water would be an excellent cross curricular link.

Discussions

Even today, palaeontologists are unsure as to what these ancient creatures would have looked like. However, using modern day animals as a guide, we can establish that camouflage and bright colours would have been common to either help the animal blend in or stand out as a dangerous predator.

Extensions and Adaptations

You could run a simple experiment to demonstrate jet propulsion to the children that links to *Forces* in Year 5. Thread a plastic drinking straw onto a length of string. Tie each end of the string to a chair, cabinet handle, or other sturdy anchor point; the two anchor points should be about the same height. Move the straw to one end of the string. Blow up a balloon and pinch it shut (don't tie it). You may want to draw a picture of an ammonite on the balloon, but remember it needs to face backwards to direction of movement. Use masking or scotch tape to attach the balloon to the straw, as shown. Let the balloon go and watch it zip down the string! The air escaping the balloon provides the "fuel" for the ammonite and models how it would have moved through the water.

Links to Other Resources

How did Ammonites Move? links well to the following resources:

- Fossil Detectives
- How do Fossils Form?