



# Slow **SNAIL**ing

## What are snails?



Lately, when I go outside in the morning, I notice a lot of slime trails along the front steps and in the grass. If I follow the slime trails long enough I eventually come across a snail! I see the shell, I see the slimy form slowly moving along the grass, and I wonder, what on earth is a snail?

Land snails are **gastropod mollusks** that have shells. If they didn't have shells, then they would just be slugs. .... They only have 1 foot but no bones! They glide along on this one foot which is lubricated by mucus. Think about how you have to grease a cookie sheet with oil or butter so the cookies won't stick – it's the same reason why the snails lay down mucus (not the same as boogers). Most garden snails are **herbivores**, meaning they only eat plants. A human being who is vegan, meaning they don't eat any animal products, would also be considered an **herbivore**.

Snails only have 1 shell that grows with them over time.

*If you want to see what it's like for creatures that have the change into new shells as they get bigger, watch this video about hermit crabs!*



I was curious about what is going on under the shell. Examine this picture to see how a snail's organs all fit in their shell! They have a small hole just in front of their shell for breathing!

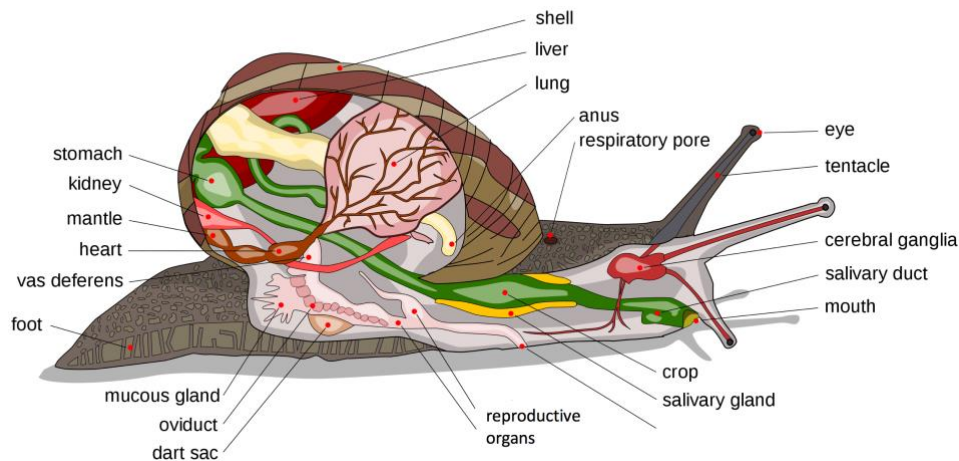


Figure 1: By Original by AI2, English captions and other edits by Jeff Dahl - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

## EXPERIMENT 1: Explore a Snail

You will need:

- Your observation journal
- A pencil
- A ruler
- A magnifying glass if you have one

Instructions:

1. Go outside on a walk. This is best done early in the morning when you first wake up, or in the late afternoon at dusk.
2. Look through the grass and underneath the bushes for a snail.
3. Snails like cool, wet places, so see if you can 'think like a snail' and find somewhere places they may like.

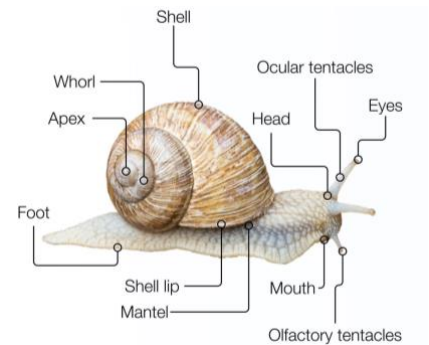


Figure 2: This snail was in my garden this morning!

4. If you find something that looks like a snail without a shell, remember that is a slug!
5. Once you've found a snail, and its ok if it takes a few days to find one, start your observation.
6. In your nature journal, note down the time, date and location in your nature journal
7. Start by measuring the snail's full body length and then of just its shell at the base (where the body comes out).
  - a. Remember that scientists use centimeters or millimeters, not inches!



8. Make these notes in your observation journal. You can even draw a sketch of the snail and color in its shell!
9. Next, get very close (without touching the snail) and examine the shell and the body. Using this chart, see if you can find all of the parts of the snails body. One of my favorite things about being a scientist, is getting to explore outside, observe wildlife in action, and learn something new and surprising every time I do!
10. Have fun 😊



### CRAFT 2: Create a mini snail!

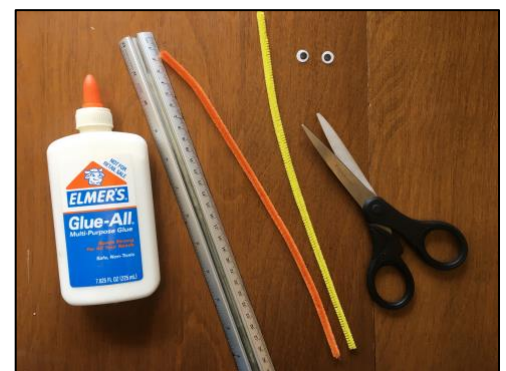
This is a cute little craft you can make and hide around your house. See how long it takes someone in your family to find it, and then start over again!

#### You will need:

- Pipe Cleaners (2 colors)
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Googly Eyes (optional)
- Glue

#### Instructions:

1. Take your two pipe cleaners and line them up next to your ruler. Cut 1 color into two pieces that are each 15 centimeters long. Cut the other color 10 centimeters long.

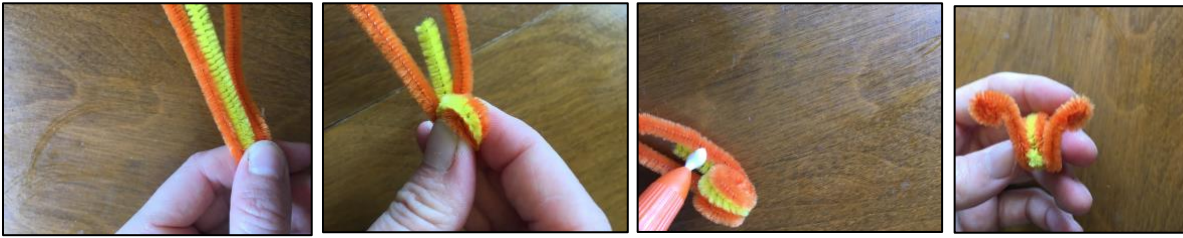


2. Line up the 3 pieces and start before the middle color runs

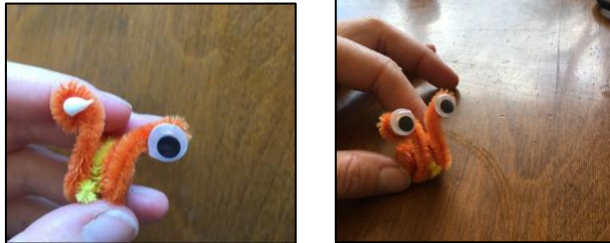


rolling them together tightly. Just out, add some glue and then send the

other two pieces up and start rolling their eyes in at opposite directions.



3. Glue on the googly eyes and let it dry! *If you don't have googly eyes, you could just draw on eyes with a marker.*



4. Hide your snail in plain sight and see how long it takes your parent to find 😊



### Digging Deeper: Send some Snail Mail!

Once upon a time there wasn't email or text message (I know, scary...).

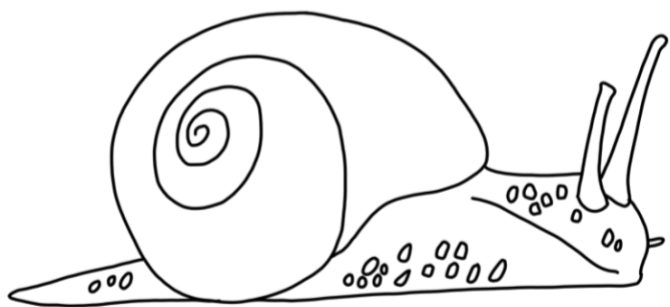
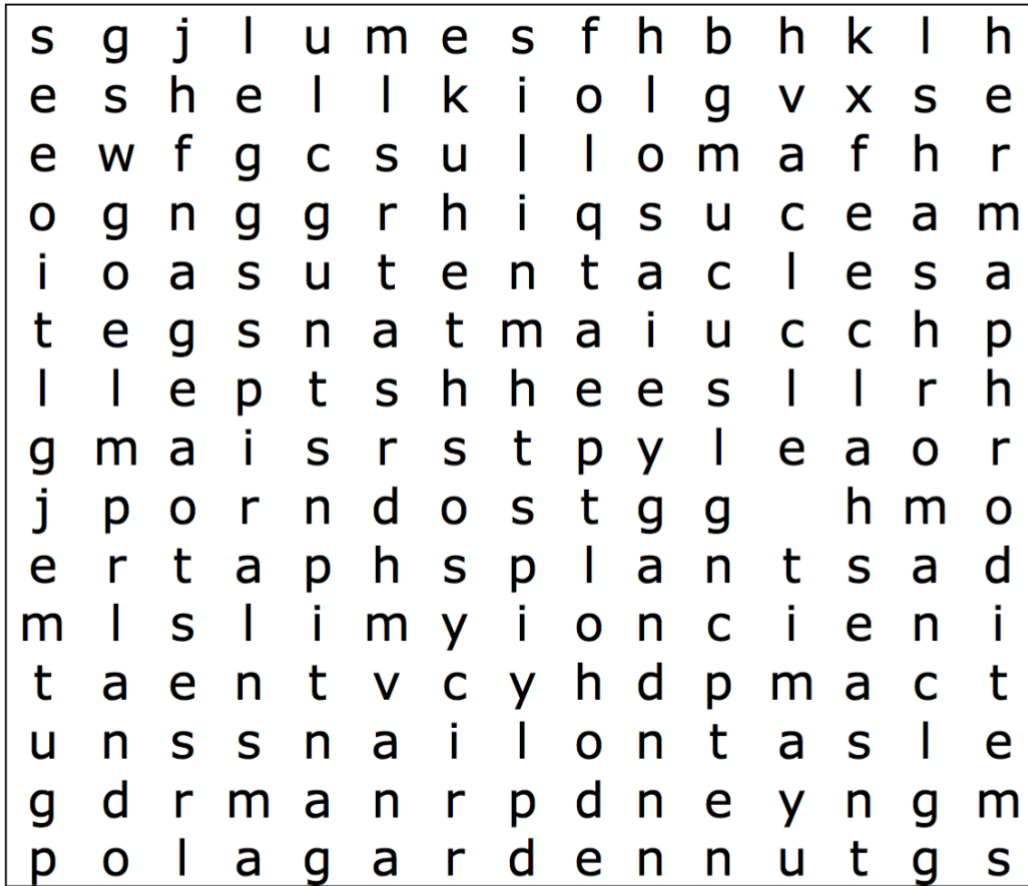
People would send each other letters. Once technology came on the scene, this became known as snail mail, since it was considered to be so slow compared to something like email. **While you're at home**, it's a great time to send a snail mail letter to someone you love as a surprise! You can write about all the fun things you've been doing as a Home Explorer!



### ACTIVITY 3: Snailing along word search

#### Instructions:

See if you can find all of the snail words in this puzzle! Don't forget to look diagonally too!



- |           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| Shell     | Gastropod     |
| Spiral    | Mucus         |
| Tentacles | Eggs          |
| Plants    | Land          |
| Sea       | Garden        |
| Roman     | Mollusc       |
| Slimy     | Hermaphrodite |
| Snail     |               |

Thanks for conducting science with me for this Home Explorer activity from Umpqua Watersheds Education Program.

Join me for new activities posted every week!

- Ms. Robyn

