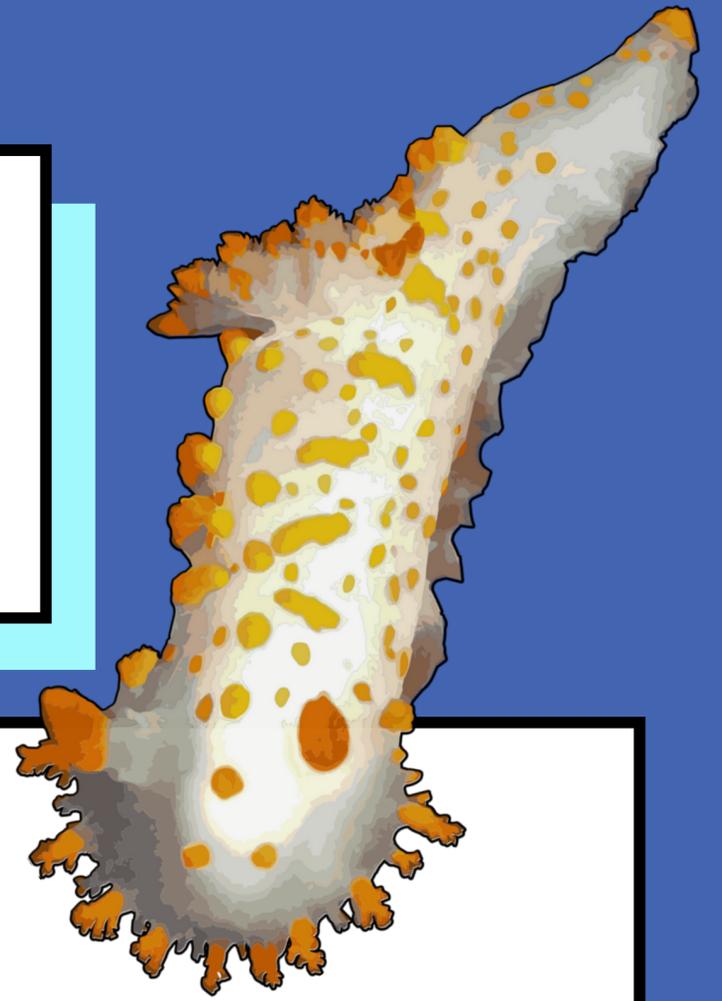
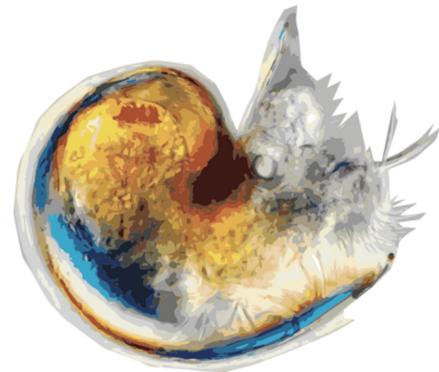


SEA SLUG

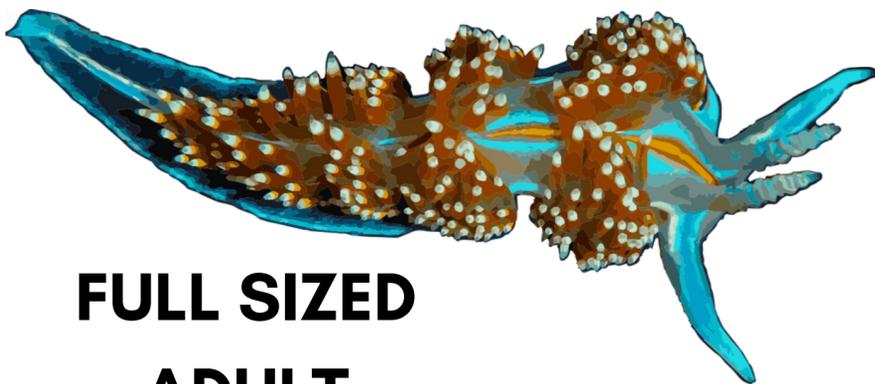
LIFE CYCLE



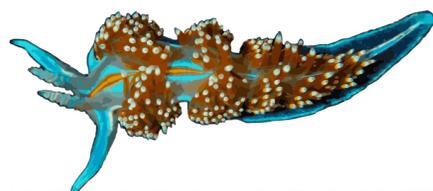
EGGS



VELIGER



**FULL SIZED
ADULT**



SMALL ADULT



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LIFE CYCLE OVERVIEW



EGG: Nudibranchs lay their eggs in long spiral strings or clusters, which they attach to rocks, seaweed, or other surfaces. Some nudibranchs make a unique egg mass shape. Depending on the species, a few eggs of up to a million are laid at one time.

VELIGER: After the eggs hatch, the young nudibranchs, begin their larval stage. This process can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months, depending on the species of nudibranch, the size of the egg, and the water temperature. The larval stage is called a **veliger**, and is microscopic.

The veliger larvae have a small shell and a pair of cilia, or hair-like appendages, which it uses to move through the water. It feeds on small organisms, such as algae and plankton, and grows until it is ready to metamorphose into an adult nudibranch.

During the veliger stage, the organism can disperse and colonize new areas. After floating around in the water for some time, it finds a perfect spot to metamorphose, which depends on chemical cues from its environment, like the presence of its food.

Some species of nudibranchs don't have a veliger stage and go from egg to immature adult directly.

ADULT: Once the veliger larvae have metamorphosed, which includes losing their shell, it becomes an adult nudibranch. It will then begin to feed, grow and eventually find a mate to reproduce. As the nudibranch feeds, it gets bigger until it reaches its adult size.

They typically move slowly and feed on things like small sea anemones, hydroids, and sponges. Most nudibranchs are less than a few inches long, but some species can get much larger, up to 8 inches (20cm) in length! Adult nudibranchs usually live for a year or less.

Their bright colors and unique shapes, help them blend in with their surroundings or warn off predators since they no longer have a hard shell for protection.



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LIFE CYCLE ACTIVITY

Draw each stage of the nudibranch lifecycle.
Then write one sentence about each stage.

Name:

Date:

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

1. First, _____

2. Next, _____

3. Last, _____



LIFE CYCLE ACTIVITY

Draw a scene that includes each stage of the nudibranch lifecycle.



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