

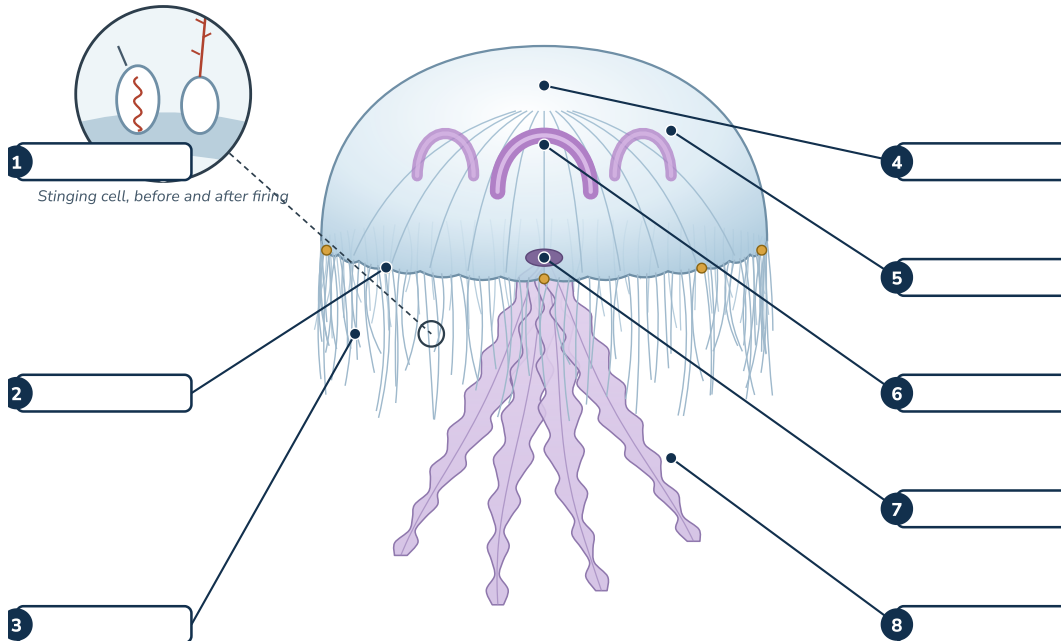
LEARN WITH TAYO • MARINE BIOLOGY • MODULE 1

The Moon Jellyfish

Aurelia aurita

Look at the diagram. Write the correct name from the word bank in each numbered box.

bell | gonads | mouth | oral arms | radial canals | rhopalia | stinging cell | tentacles



The circle shows a close-up of a single stinging cell, much bigger than real life.

Did you know?

- A moon jellyfish is about **95% water**.
- It has **no brain, heart, blood or bones**. A net of nerves runs through its body.
- The four rings are its **gonads**, where eggs or sperm are made.
- Each stinging cell fires a tiny **coiled thread** in less than a millionth of a second.
- Sea turtles and sunfish **eat** moon jellyfish.

About the Moon Jellyfish

The moon jellyfish is a **cnidarian**, in the same group as corals and anemones. It lives in coastal seas all over the world, including around Britain, and is often seen in summer.

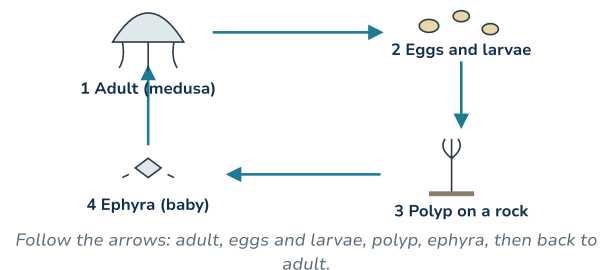
How does it move? It squeezes its bell to push water out, then relaxes. It swims weakly, so it mostly drifts with currents.

What does it eat? Plankton, tiny animals such as copepods and fish eggs. These stick to the bell and are caught by stinging cells on the tentacles. The oral arms pass the food to the mouth.

How does it sense? Eight rhopalia around the edge of the bell sense light and gravity, so it knows which way is up.

Life cycle: its eggs hatch into larvae that settle on rocks as tiny polyps. In spring the polyps bud off baby jellyfish called ephyrae, which grow into adults.

The life cycle of a moon jellyfish



Where does it live? Coastal seas, usually in the **sunlight zone** (0 to 200 m), worldwide.

Functions of Each Part	
Part	Function
Bell	
Gonads	
Radial canals	
Rhopalia	
Tentacles	
Oral arms	
Mouth	

Hint: use the diagram, the About box and the Did you know? panel to fill in the Function column.

Answer the Questions

- Which animal group is the moon jellyfish in, and name one other animal in the same group.
- Describe how a moon jellyfish swims.
- How does a jellyfish catch its food? Use the words stinging cells and oral arms.
- A jellyfish has only one body opening. What two jobs does the mouth do?
- Why does a moon jellyfish collapse if you lift it out of the water?
- Stretch: jellyfish blooms are becoming more common in some seas. Suggest one reason why, and one problem a bloom might cause.