

Clowning around with Sea Anemones

Summary of Craft: In this craft, kids create their own anemone and clownfish to explore and learn concepts like predation, mutualism, nematocysts, and symbiosis. (*Definitions are located in the extension activity section*)

Age Range: 5-9

Materials List:

- construction paper
- scissors
- tape/glue
- cardstock/regular paper
- floral wire



Background Information: Sea anemones are marine animals in the *Cnidaria* phylum. Anemones are found throughout coastal regions, but mainly in temperate regions. The body of an anemone is a column-like shape, one end of the body is attached to a sturdy surface, and the other end is the mouth. Anemones protect themselves with tentacles that sting (*nematocysts*).

Clownfish, like Nemo, are colored bright orange with white stripes and are commonly found near anemones. Clownfish are small and are easily sought as prey. To avoid *predation*, the fish hide behind the stinging tentacles of anemones. This is an act of *symbiosis*. Clownfish hide, lure predators to the anemone, and the anemone eats the prey. This is an example of *mutualism*.

How to do craft:

Step 1: Cut out two sea anemones from two different shades of construction paper. Include a half-oval shape for the base. After you cut out the first sea anemone, trace it to create the second.

Step 2: Trace around the base of the sea anemone onto grey construction paper to make a rock base. Glue or tape the base of each anemone.

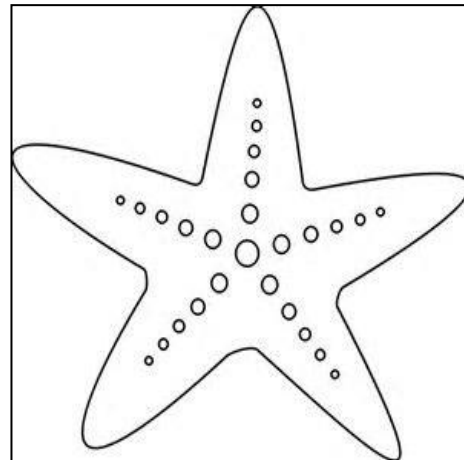
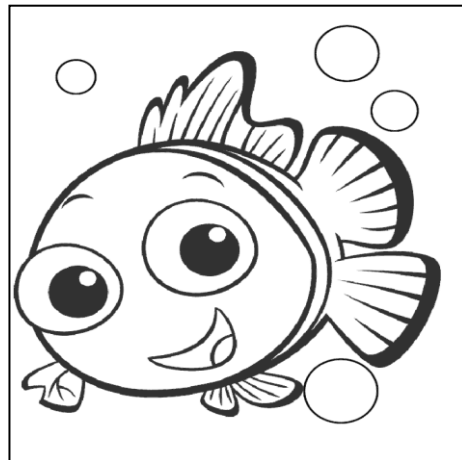
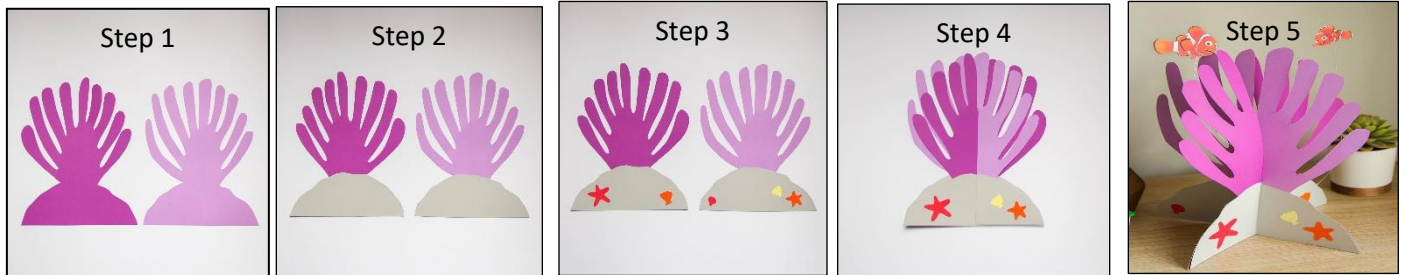
Step 3: Cut out small shells and starfish from colorful construction paper. Glue or tape to the rock base.

Step 4: To make the anemone stand, cut a single line halfway up the middle of one piece, and halfway from the top of the other. Slide the pieces together to form your 3D sea anemone.

Step 5: Print a cut out of Nemo onto paper. Cut it out and color.

Step 6: Tape each fish to a piece of floral wire. Tape the other end of the floral wire to the base of the sea anemone.

Step 7: Reinforce the base by taping it together.



Extension Activity: Vocabulary and Storytelling

If your child or student is looking for a challenge, ask them to create a story that explains the unique and special relationship between the clownfish and anemone. Try to incorporate the following words:

1. Nematocyst: a specialized cell in tentacles containing a venomous coiled thread that can be projected in self defense or to capture prey.
2. Predation: a biological interaction where one organism, the predator, eats another organism, its prey.
3. Symbiosis: Interaction between two different organisms living in close physical proximity, that advantages both.
4. Mutualism: describes the ecological interaction between two or more species where each species has a benefit.

Citations:

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How are you using this information?	This craft is used to help explore and teach concepts like nematocysts, predation, symbiosis, and mutualism.

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