

Invertebrates: *What Is a Mollusk?* (cont.)

The **cephalopods** live in the ocean and are adapted for swimming. They are the most specialized and complex members of the mollusca phylum. Cephalopods, which means “head-footed,” have a large well-developed head and a foot, which is divided into many arms. The feet, or arms of these amazing creatures are connected to their heads, not their bodies. The body is in front of the head. These mollusks usually do not have an external shell and include the octopus, squid, cuttlefish, and nautilus. However, the chambered nautilus is an exception; they are the only member of the cephalopods that has a heavy external shell. To swim or float, they have a unique adaptation that allows them to fill their shell with a gas. Although they appear to be very different from the other mollusks, they are similar. They have a mantle, a mantle cavity, a radula, and a similar digestive tract. Cephalopods have a strong beak that is used for biting into prey. The octopus and squid have arms with disc-shaped suckers used for gripping their prey. They can squeeze into a space one-tenth the size of their body. Have you ever wondered what the difference is between an octopus and a squid? An octopus has eight arms and a squid has ten (two are longer than the other eight). The blue-ringed octopus is the most toxic cephalopod; a bite is nearly always fatal to humans.

