

GREEN kids ACTIVITY

HOW DOES A SNAIL'S FOOT WORK?



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Carrying your house on your back is a pretty cool adaptation, but so is walking on a slimy foot! Try this experiment to discover how a snail's foot works.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A live garden snail*
- An absolutely clean, clear glass jar at least 10 cm tall

WHAT TO DO

1. Put the snail into the jar. Cover the jar with a piece of plastic wrap with holes punched in. Watch as the snail moves around and begins to crawl up the side. Can you see how it is able to move on its single 'foot'? Look for dark strips of muscle on the underside that pull it along on its bed of slime. Describe the kind of motion the snail's foot makes. Does it leave a 'snail trail'?

2. Give the snail a piece of lettuce. Watch through the glass *from below* as it eats with its rough, raspy tongue (like sandpaper). If you've got a magnifying glass, you can see the tongue making circular cutting movements. What else will your snail eat?
3. Add a second snail – do the two snails hang out together?
4. Write up your findings in your nature notebook. Make a sketch of your snail and colour it.

NOTE: if you can't find a snail, a slug will do as well, but you may need a taller jar.

Important! Never leave the jar in the sun. After two days, put your snails back where you found them.

TO THINK ABOUT & WONDER Why slime? The slime that the animal makes helps it move smoothly and stops it falling off when it goes up walls and plant stems. Did you also notice that your snail or slug has four tentacles on its head? The eyes on the tips of the tentacles can't do much more than tell light from dark, but they can smell food! The long stalks sniff out food far away, while the short ones can pick up stinky treats nearby.

The Exploration Club for Families... NatureKids BC helps children get outdoors to play, imagine and explore in nearby nature. Join a family nature club near you or become a free-range member. Find out more at: www.naturekidsbc.ca. If you are already a member you can use this activity as part of your Action Awards Quest!

