



What is Plankton??

Plankton are organisms that drift through the water and cannot swim against the current. Animal plankton is called zooplankton and plant-like algae plankton is called phytoplankton. Some organisms called holoplankton spend their entire lives as plankton. One example of holoplankton is the copepod. Other organisms called meroplankton spend only the first part of their lives as plankton, then are able to swim against the currents when they grow bigger. Some examples of meroplankton include baby snails, sea stars, worms, crabs, and fish.

Let's see if you can figure out which animals are zooplankton!

1. Whales?
Whales are not plankton. Even baby whales can swim against the current.
2. Krill?
Krill is plankton! As you may know, baleen whales eat krill. Plankton is a major food source for many animals!
3. Fish?
Don't forget what you read earlier! Fish spend only the first part of their life as meroplankton.
4. Jellyfish?
Jellyfish are plankton! They cannot swim against the current.

What is Phytoplankton?

Did you know much of the Earth's oxygen comes from phytoplankton? You read earlier that phytoplankton is plant-like algae. These are microscopic organisms near the surface of the water. Microscopic means the plants are so small, you need a microscope to see them! Phytoplankton create oxygen from a process called photosynthesis. Just like plants on land, phytoplankton need the sun for energy. They take in carbon dioxide and produce oxygen for us to breathe! Now try the fill-in-the-blank activity to see what you've learned!





Cabrillo
Marine
Aquarium

Plankton Fill-In-the-Blank!

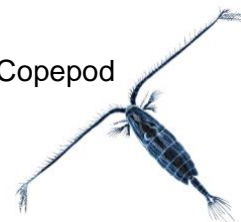
1. Plant-like plankton is called

Veliger Larva/Baby Snail



2. Organisms that spend their whole life as plankton are called

Copepod



3. What type of plankton do baleen whales eat?

Krill



4. Animal plankton is called

5. The process where plants produce oxygen from the energy of the sun is called

Moon Jelly



6. Organisms that spend only the first part of their life as plankton are called

7. Much of the Earth's oxygen comes from

Dinoflagellate



Answer key: 1. Phytoplankton 2. Holoplankton 3. Krill 4. Zooplankton 5. Photosynthesis 6. Meroplankton 7. Phytoplankton

