

Molluscs, such as gastropods and bivalves, have a soft body and a hard shell for protection. Unlike hermit crabs that borrow shells (from dead molluscs) for protection, molluscs create their own shell that grows with them as they mature.

The shell is produced by taking in minerals from the environment. Molluscs are able to create calcium carbonate, which is secreted by specialised cells within the mantle to create their shell.

As the mollusc grows, the shell thickens to ensure that it stays strong for its size. Some molluscs also have an iridescent internal layer of nacre (or mother of pearl) that protects their soft flesh from damage.

To help explain how gastropods (such as abalone and cone shells) grow, try *Making Spirals*.

Spiral shells are like cones rolled up. If we could unroll the spiral we would have a cone. Follow the instructions below to make your own spiral shell.

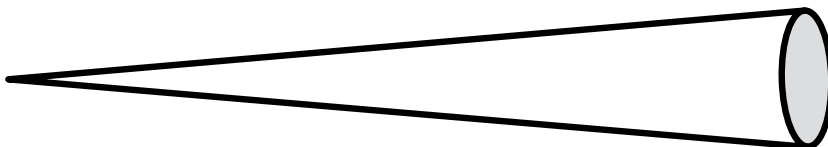
MATERIALS

Plasticine

Satay or kebab sticks

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make a plasticine cone.



2. Start with the pointed end and coil your plasticine cone round the satay stick. Make sure the coils touch each other...

