

# Sponges

Ancient, COLOURFUL and FULL OF HOLES!

Sponges belong to a phylum of animals called Porifera, meaning 'pore-bearer'. They are characterised by a body that is punctured with microscopic holes or pores, as well as one or more larger round openings or vents. Because they are sedentary (fixed in one place), colourful and simple in structure, sponges are often mistaken for plants. Sponges are in fact the simplest form of multicellular animal. They have no mouth, internal organs or nerves. Most sponges are filter feeders, pumping water through their bodies at a surprisingly high rate to acquire the oxygen and food they need. They come in a wide variety of colours including red, pink, purple, orange, blue, yellow and white;

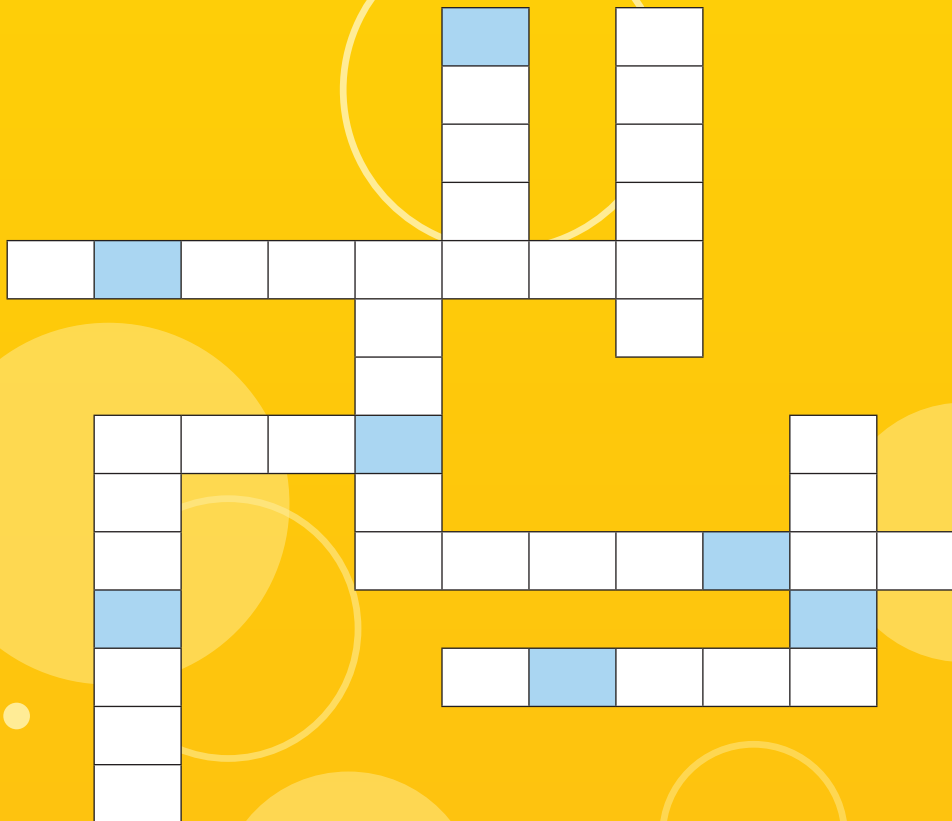
and their textures range from soft and readily compressible to rubbery or as hard as stone. Sponges are divided into three groups (or classes):

**Demospongiae** – this class includes the bath sponges that in the past were used for washing, but are now used in the cosmetics and medical industries.

**Calcarea** – calcareous sponges are small and typically found in shallow waters.

**Hexactinellidea** – glass sponges occur in deep water and have a specialised body organisation, different from all other sponges.

Complete the word-fill below using these nine (9) words relating to sponges!



**8 letters**  
Porifera

**7 letters**  
Sponges  
Rubbery

**6 letters**  
Animal  
Filter

**5 letters**  
Pores  
Stone  
Glass

**4 letters**  
Soft

Rearrange the letters in the shaded boxes to find the missing word.

Microscopic structures called spicules provide a support or '\_\_\_ K \_\_\_' for the animal.