

E. T. - A LOCAL WAY OF LEARNING

**Title:** SHELL INVESTIGATIONS  
**Author:** Kathryn Doss  
Eulalie R. Rivera Elementary School

**Grade Level:** 5-6

<b>Concepts:</b>	<b>Disciplines:</b>
2. Ecosystems	1. Language Arts
8. Values	2. Science
12. Stewardship	3. Art
	4. Math

**Objective:**

The students will examine and identify shells using listed questions as a guideline.

**Rationale:**

Shells are an integral part of the Virgin Islands Community. This activity will help create a greater awareness of mollusks (the shell, together with the animal that lives inside.)

**Materials Needed:**

At least eight shells for each group of 4-6 students. Hand lens, if available.

**Directions/Activity:**

Give each group of students a box of shells and a copy of the questions on the next page.

**NOTE:**

This format, where a collection and a list of investigative questions are given to the students is often called a "Discovery Box." It can be used to investigate a variety of items such as rocks, feathers, leaves, vacated bird nests, etc.'

**Discuss:**

What contribution do shelled animals (mollusks) make to our environment? (food to ornaments)

**Teacher Reference:**

Clemmons, Elizabeth: Shells Are Where You Find Them  
Dudly, Ruth: Sea Shells  
Goudey, Alice E.: Houses From The Sea

## Shell Investigations

1. Look at the shapes of the shells in front of you. Does the shape give you a clue to the animal's habitat in the water or on the land?

- Which ones attach themselves to rocks?
- Which ones may bury themselves in the sand?
- Do some scoot around on the ocean floor?
- Which ones are found on land?

2. How is the shell designed for protection? What about thickness? Are there any spines? What about the color?

3. Can you see any growth rings on the shell? Use a hand lens to try and count the number of growth cycles for each shell.

4. Some mollusks (the animal and its shell) are single shelled (univalved or gastropods). Others are double shelled (bivalved). Can you determine which types of shells are in your collection?

5. What do these mollusks eat? Would you think your shells contained fast or slow moving animals? How does this help determine what they eat?

6. Look through available shell books and see if you can identify the shells in your collection.

7. Draw the shells.

