

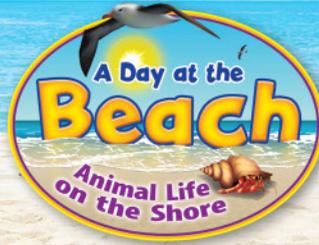
Beach Fleas

and Other
Tiny Sand
Animals



by Ellen Lawrence

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Beach Fleas

and Other Tiny Sand Animals

by Ellen Lawrence

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Meet the Beach Fleas

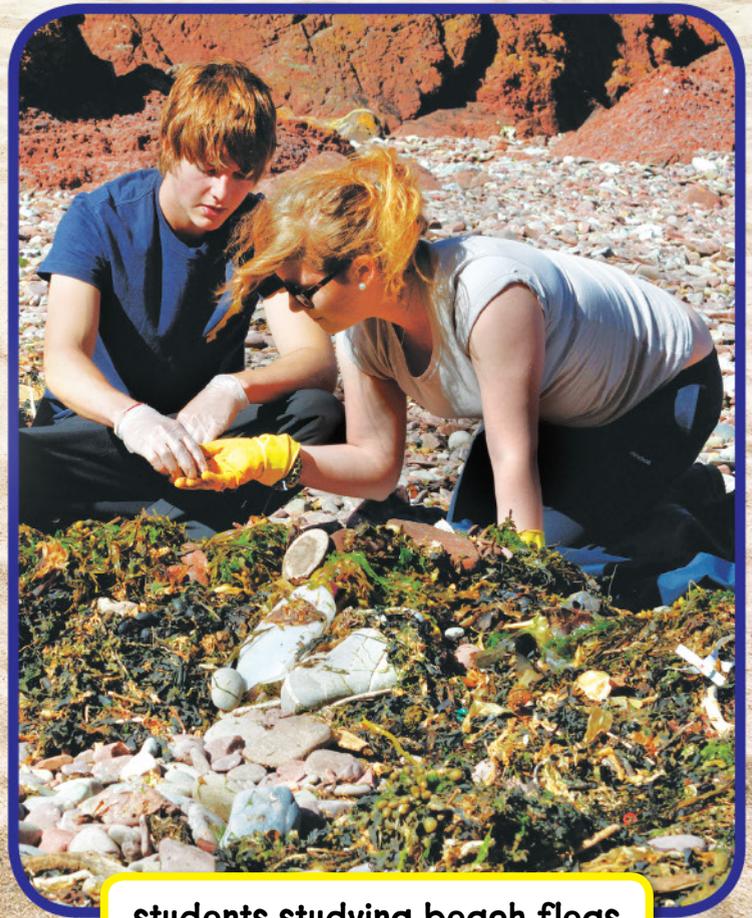
A beach is often home to seals, seagulls, and crabs.

Did you know that it's also home to millions of tiny animals, including beach fleas?

These mini-creatures bury themselves in the sand under seaweed.

Lift up a piece of seaweed, and dozens of beach fleas may be hiding underneath!

Beach fleas are also known as sand hoppers or beach hoppers. How do you think they got their name?



students studying beach fleas



A beach flea is a type of tiny **crustacean**. It has an outer shell and a body that's made up of segments, or sections.

beach fleas

segments

Clean-Up Crew

A beach flea, or sand hopper, is less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) long.

It may be tiny, but it's an excellent jumper.

Boing! It can leap 3 feet (0.9 m) in a single jump!

During the day, a beach flea often burrows into the sand.

This keeps its body from drying out in the sun.

At night, it looks for dead seaweed and plants to eat.



beach fleas buried in sand

A close-up photograph of a translucent beach flea on green seaweed. The flea has a segmented body with a dark stripe along its back and several pairs of legs. It is positioned on a piece of seaweed, and its mouthparts are visible near the plant. The background is a dense layer of similar seaweed.

a beach flea
eating seaweed

A callout box shaped like a seashell with a pinkish-orange interior and a white exterior. It contains text about beach fleas.

Beach fleas
help clean up dead,
smelly seaweed that covers
some beaches. They may
be tiny, but there
are lots of them to
do the work.

A blue rounded rectangular callout box containing a question.

Why do you think being a good
jumper is helpful to a beach flea?