

External features of the squid

Fins

Squid can use their fins to steer and stabilise themselves when they swim at high speed, but they can also use the fins to propel themselves when swimming at slow speed. During jet propulsion, squid can also fold their fins around the mantle for streamlining.

Mantle

Chromatophores

Squid can change colour by expanding/contracting the muscles around these small pigment sacks. Chromatophores contain a limited number of pigments (red, orange, yellow, brown), but squid can also show colours like blue and green thanks to layers of cells called iridophores, which reflect light to produce iridescent colours.

Head

Beak

Its main function is to slice prey into bite-sized pieces. The top of the beak is hooked and the bottom part is broader, much like the beak of an eagle. This makes the squid's beak very strong and perfect for crushing the external skeletons of crustaceans. Squid also eat fish and even other squid, and their main predators are birds, large fish, and toothed whales. The deep-sea battles between colossal squid (which can weight half a tonne!) and sperm whales are well known, and undigested squid beaks contribute to the production of whale ambergris.

Eyes

Unlike humans, which have three types of cone cells to distinguish red, green, and blue light, squid have just one type of cone and use a different mechanism, called 'chromatic aberration', to discriminate colours. This is possible thanks to their unique W-shaped, U-shaped, or dumbbell shaped pupils!

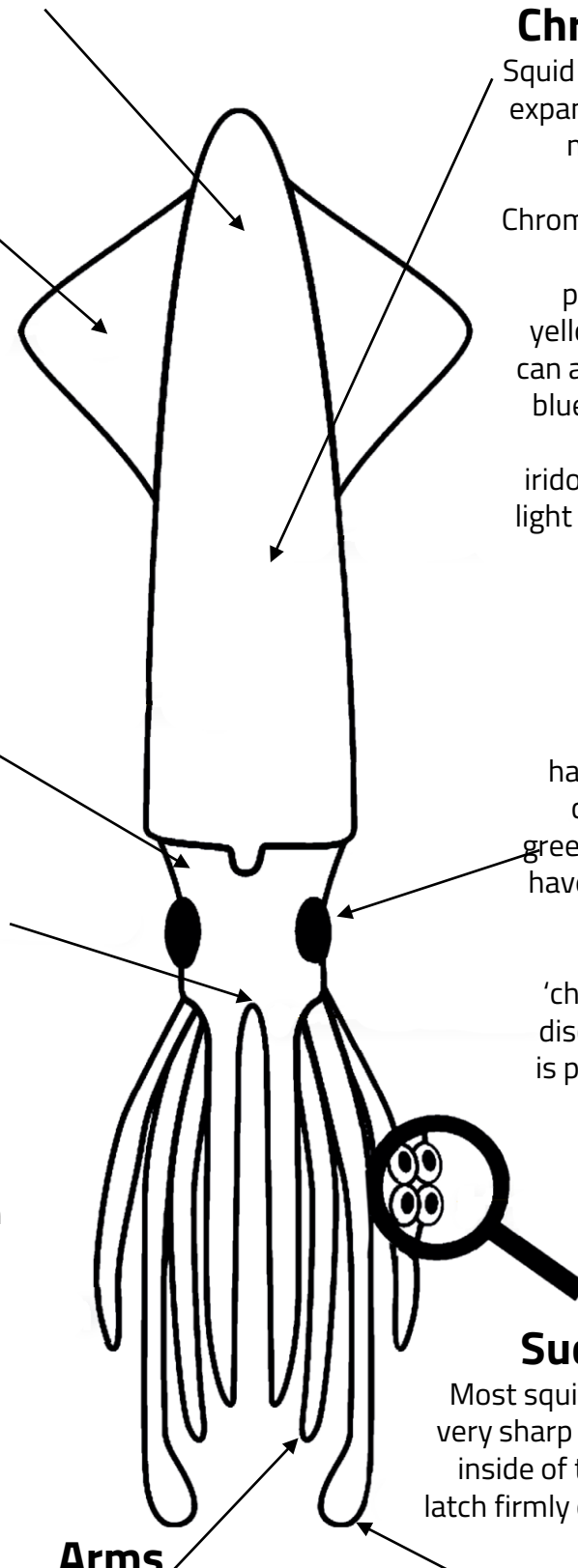
Suction cups

Most squid have a ring of very sharp teeth lining the inside of their suckers to latch firmly onto their prey.

Arms

Like octopus, squid have eight arms, but they additionally have two longer tentacles.

Tentacles



Internal features of the squid

