

Sea Urchin and Sea Otter Craft

Purple sea urchins of the California coast are spine-covered invertebrates with tube feet that look like suction cups all over their body. If sea urchin populations are not limited by predators like sea otters, they can eat through 30 feet of giant kelp forest in one month.

Sea urchin materials

Toothpicks

Clay or play dough. A recipe for homemade play dough can be found below.

String, yarn, or floss



Sea otters are mammals with very thick fur. While sea otters often dive for their food, they always eat while floating on their backs. To open clams and mussels, sea otters will use stones as tools to help break open their prey. They also enjoy abalones and sea urchins—some sea otters love eating purple sea urchins so much that it will actually dye their skeletons slightly purple! Otters play a key role in keeping urchin populations in check, which keeps kelp forests healthy.

Sea otter materials

Glue

Scissors

Sea otter template

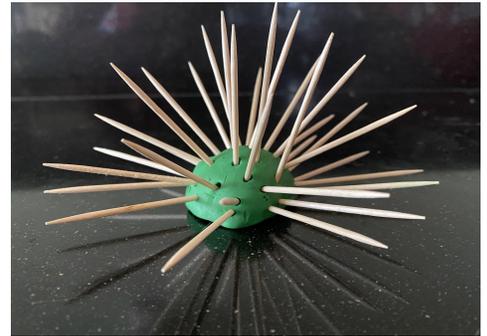
Paper lunch bag

Crayons or colored pencils

Print-out template (page 3)

Sea urchin directions

1. **Form** a ball with your clay or play dough.
2. Use the yarn, floss, or string to **cut** the clay ball in half.
3. **Place** the clay flat side down so it forms a dome.
4. **Push** toothpicks into the dome so they don't fall out.
5. Your sea urchin is ready to be enjoyed by your sea otter puppet.



Sea otter puppet directions

1. **Print** out the template on page 3.
2. **Color** the sea otter and urchin any way you'd like.
3. **Cut** out all the pieces.
4. **Glue** the otter's face on the flap at the bottom of the bag. Then **glue** on the urchin, front and back paws, and tail.
5. Your puppet is ready for play!



Play dough recipe

Adult supervision and assistance required.

1. Combine 1 cup flour, 2 teaspoons cream of tartar, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup salt.
2. Add 1 cup water and 1 tablespoon cooking oil. Stir well.
3. Add food coloring of your choice.
4. Heat mixture on medium-low, stirring constantly.
5. Remove from heat when the mixture solidifies.
6. Put the play dough on wax paper and let it cool for at least 30 minutes.
7. Store in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to 2 months.



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