



Giant Pacific Octopus

The giant Pacific octopus is truly a giant. An adult's arms can stretch up to 14 feet, and one can weigh over 30 lbs. While humans have a centralized brain inside the skull, octopuses have a brain in the mantle—the large bulb in front of the slit-shaped eyes—as well as a brain in each of the eight arms, for a total of 9.

Other unusual features of the giant Pacific octopus include blue blood and the ability to change from orange to whitish-gray in an instant thanks to specialized cells called *chromatophores*.

Where: Giant Pacific Octopuses are found along the coasts of the Pacific Ocean from California to Alaska and then across along Russia and southwest to Japan.

Fun Fact: A full-size giant Pacific octopus could fit through a circle made with your index fingers and thumbs. The only solid part of an octopus is its bird-like beak.

Connection: Octopuses are the smartest *invertebrates* on the planet. They develop their smarts in only a few years (and typically live less than 5 years). At what rate do humans grow their intelligence?

Writing: Write a story from the perspective of a Giant Pacific Octopus. Describe how you move, change colors, and fit into tiny spaces. What do you see, hear, and smell?