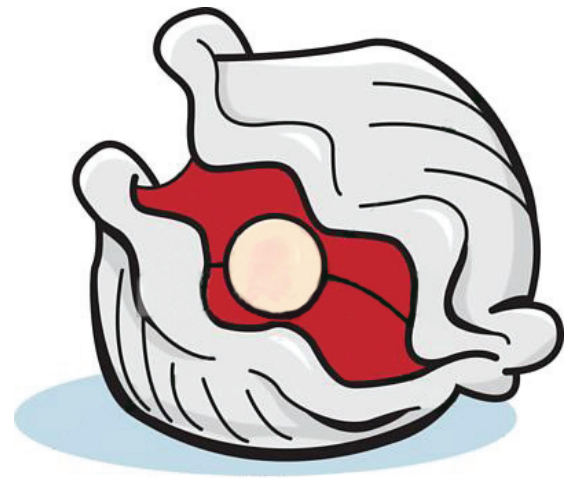


# How is a pearl formed?

Have you ever had a small piece of dust get in your eye? It was probably annoying, but when an oyster gets dust inside its shell, it turns the dust speck into a pearl!

Oysters try and protect themselves from unwanted visitors by covering any outside dust particles with a mineral substance called nacre. Layers and layers of nacre eventually form a pearl.

Natural pearls form when a piece of dust gets into an oyster's shell by chance. Cultured pearls are the result of humans forcing a dust particle into an oyster's shell. Pearls are so popular today that a lot of people don't want to wait for a pearl to form naturally!



## QUESTION & ANSWER:

**How do oysters protect themselves?**

They protect themselves by covering any outside dust particles with a mineral substance called nacre.

**How do natural pearls form?**

They form when a piece of dust gets into an oyster's shell by chance.

**How do cultured pearls form?**

They form when humans force a dust particle into an oyster's shell.

Can you think of anything else in nature that starts off small and plain, but after a long time turns into something beautiful?

