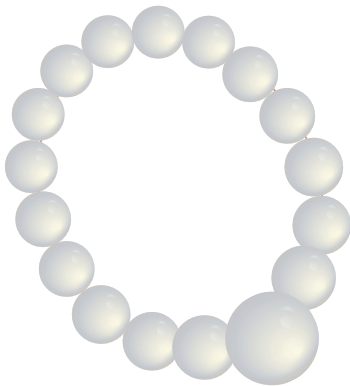
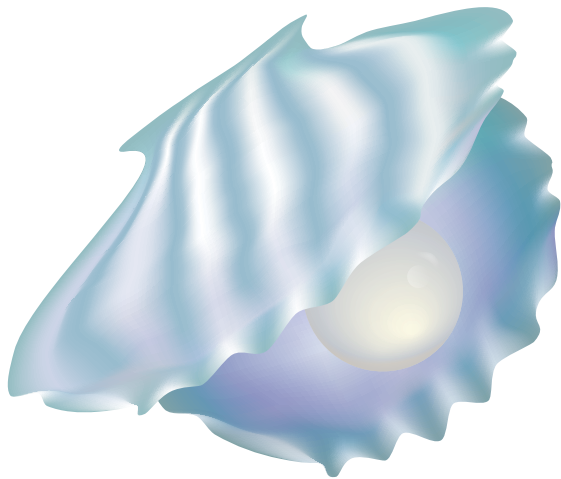

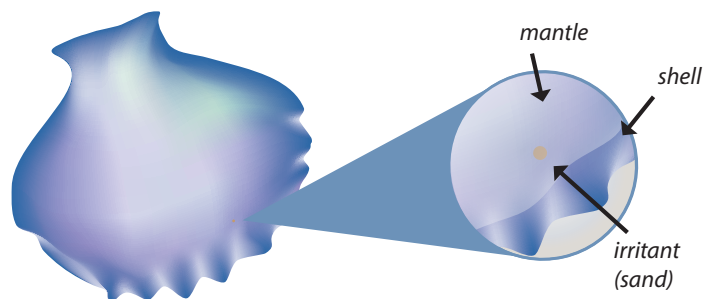


# How are Pearls Formed?



Did you know that pearls are actually mollusk mucus? Sounds gross, right? Pearls are made from the same stuff an oyster, clam, or mussel uses to make its shell. When a piece of sand or other small irritant gets under the “skin” or mantle of one of these water creatures, it secretes a mucus with minerals in it called nacre that covers the irritant. The mantle is an organ of the mollusk that is on the inside of its shell. When the nacre hardens, it forms what we know as a pearl.

Pearls form in the wild and are also made at pearl farms where people grow and tend to oysters. The pearl makers put a small, round irritant between the mantle and the inside of the shell of the oyster. The oyster gets irritated and produces nacre to form a pearl, just like in the wild. Most pearls for sale are actually made by the pearl farmers. A perfectly round pearl made in the wild is actually very rare, as the pearl will form in the shape of the irritant. Because of this, pearls come in many shapes and sizes, not just round. Some shapes of pearls are oval, pear, tear drop, ringed, and baroque (bumpy). 



## Pearl Math

Count the pearls on the necklace. (Start with the large one so you can keep track!)

## Multiply

1. If you had a necklace with 17 pearls, and you made a necklace twice as long, how many pearls would be on your new necklace?

2. If you had a necklace with 8 pearls, and you made a necklace three times as long, how many pearls would be on your new necklace?

3. You had a bracelet with 5 pearls, then you made a necklace. If you made the necklace with 5 times as many pearls as the bracelet, how many pearls would be on your new necklace?

4. If you had a necklace with 30 pearls, and you made a double necklace by adding a new string of pearls with the same number of pearls as the first, how many pearls would be on your new necklace?