Shell Seekers

MAKE • EXPLORE • DISCOVER | 4–10 with an adult · Time: 25–35 minutes to make; a short beach walk later

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Color paper shells, turn them into a discovery ring or keepsake necklace, then look for similar shapes on a beach walk. Make a memory to keep while leaving real shells on the shore.

YOU WILL NEED

Printed Shell Seekers pack • Crayons or colored pencils, child-safe scissors and glue • Reused thin card, a hole punch and a short cord or paper ring • An adult; for the beach walk, suitable footwear, water and sun protection

1. Meet the shell shapes

Look at the turret spiral, rounded ridged valve, low cone and oval slit on the reference sheet. Say what makes each outline different. They represent shell forms you can compare; not every beach has every shape.

2. Color and strengthen your cards

Color the four drawings before cutting. Use your own palette, or look at a reference chosen by your adult. Glue the sheet onto thin reused card and let it dry. Your colors are artwork, not proof of a real shell’s identity.

3. Cut and make a discovery ring

An adult helps cut around each shell with a small paper margin and punches a hole through the backing. Thread the shells onto a paper ring or short cord for a backpack tag. A necklace is optional and requires an adult-managed breakaway fastening; remove it before active play or water activities.

4. Take your clues to the beach

With your adult, choose a permitted beach area away from the surf. Look at shells where they lie. Compare outlines first, then ridges, spirals or openings that are already visible. Never turn over an animal or enter rocks or water for a match.

5. Record a shape match

On page 3, tick Seen, Similar or Not today for each shape. Draw your favorite discovery and note the beach and date. A broken shell may show a clue too. An approximate shape match is not an exact species identification.

6. Share what stays and what goes

Take home your paper shells and record sheet. Leave real shells and natural materials in place, even when they appear empty. Tell someone which pattern you noticed and how your handmade keepsake helped you remember it.

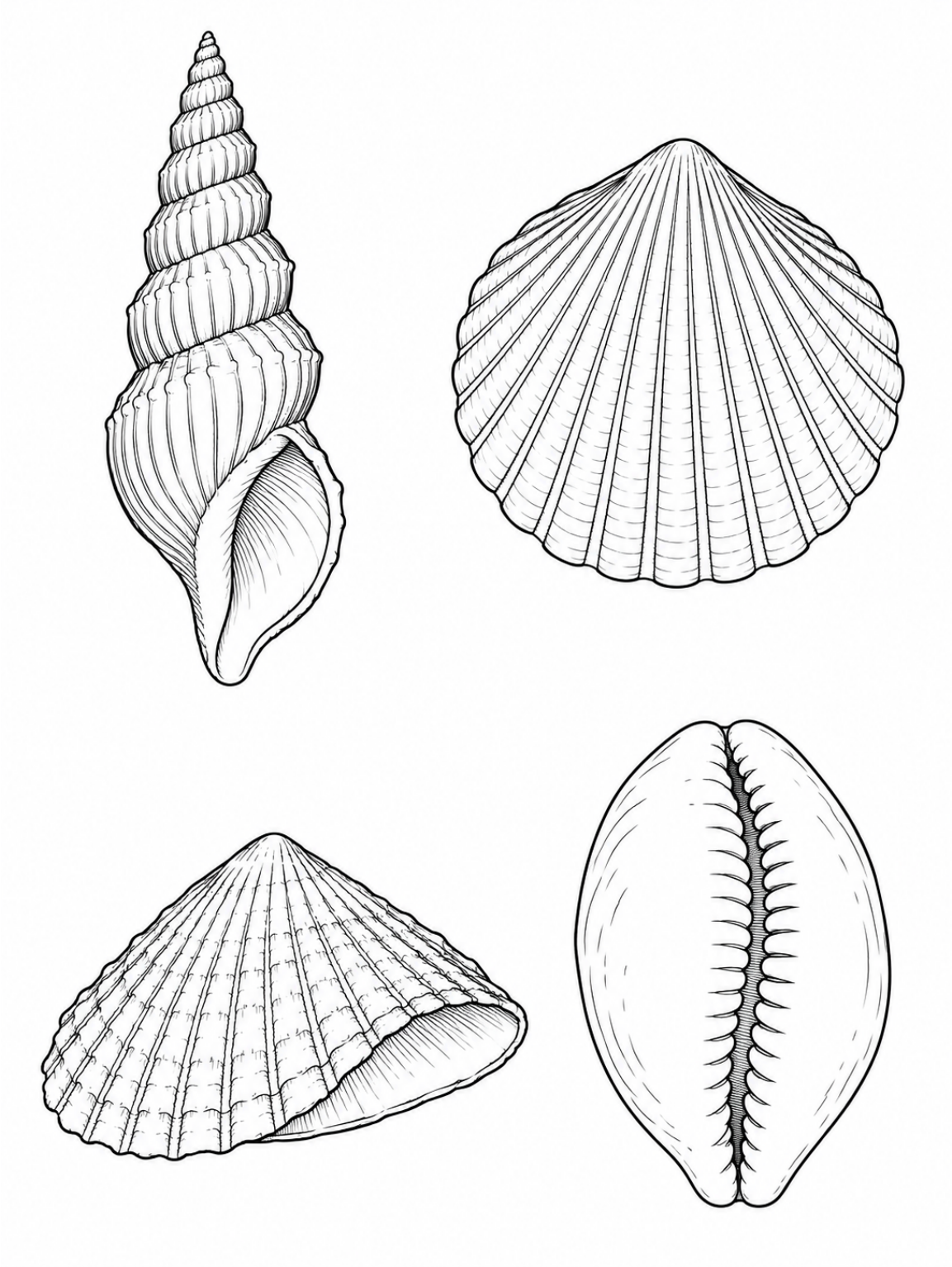
EXPLORE WITH CARE

Adults handle hole punching and help with scissors. Use the discovery ring or backpack tag for younger children; keep cord away from necks during play and never wear it in water. At the beach, watch shells in place and follow local rules. Do not collect or handle live animals.

Background: Museo Nacional de Costa Rica: shell forms

Color & cut your shell clues

Color first. Glue onto thin card. Cut around each drawing with an adult. Punch the backing.



Top: turret spiral • ribbed valve | Bottom: low cone • oval slit
Shape clues only. Drawings are not to scale and do not identify exact species.

My beach discoveries

Name: _____ Beach: _____ Date: _____

Look where shells lie. Mark a shape match, a similar clue, or Not today.

Turret spiral / Tall, winding shape

[ ] Seen [ ] Similar [ ] Not today

Ribbed valve / Rounded outline and ridges

[ ] Seen [ ] Similar [ ] Not today

Low cone / A small cap-like outline

[ ] Seen [ ] Similar [ ] Not today

Oval slit / Smooth oval with a narrow opening

[ ] Seen [ ] Similar [ ] Not today

DRAW A FAVORITE CLUE - leave the real shell where it lies.

One detail that helped me compare:

Little Explorers: try two shapes. Junior Explorers: record two features of one match.
An empty-looking shell may still matter to wildlife. Make a keepsake; leave the shell.