



Make Your Own Octopus

Build an “octopus” out of a recycled water bottle. This craft makes a great washable string puppet or an ornament to hang.

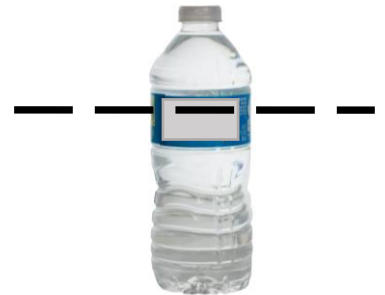
Suggested Ages - 3rd-5th Grade

Materials -

- Paper to cover the tables
- Small water bottle with lid (1/2 liter works best); preferably the “eco-friendly” plastic that is thinner and more flexible (easier to cut and edges will be softer).
- Sharpie markers or Sharpie paint markers in different colors
- Glue and googly eyes (optional, eyes can be drawn on)
- Scissors
- Yarn

Activity Instructions -

- Using scissors (**parents, please help smaller children**), cut a water bottle in two pieces by cutting across it just below the curvy top of the bottle.
- Separate the two halves. The top will be the head. The bottom will be the arms
- Starting from the top edge of the bottom section of the bottle, cut strips halfway down to make 8 arms.
- Flip the lower part of the bottle, and spread out the arms.
- Use PERMANENT markers to color the top, sides, and arms. (Note: water-based marker or paint will not stick to the plastic.)
- Coloring the two pieces of the bottle separately gives an interesting blend of colors when you put them together.
- For extra color or texture, ball up colored paper and fill the head (rounded top portion).
- Push the flat side of the bottom into the open side of the head to make your octopus.
- Let dry a minute or two, then glue or draw on eyes.
- Tie yarn around the top (or just unscrew the cap, place the end of the yarn in the bottle, and screw the lid back on).
- Voila! Bottle Octopus!



Cool Facts About the Octopus

- The **oldest** known octopus fossil belongs to an animal that lived some 296 million years ago, during the Carboniferous period.
- **Octopuses are smart.** They navigate through mazes, solve problems, remember solutions, and take things apart for fun. They even have distinct personalities.
- **Octopus arms have a mind of their own, literally!** An octopus has 9 brains: a central brain in the head and a brain that controls each arm. Two-thirds of an octopus's nerve cells reside in its arms, not its head. As a result, the arms can problem-solve how to open a shellfish while their owners are busy doing something else, like checking out a cave for more edible goodies!
- **Octopuses have blue blood.** To survive in the deep ocean, octopuses evolved a copper rather than iron-based blood, called hemocyanin, which turns its blood blue. This copper base is more efficient at transporting oxygen than hemoglobin (which is what humans and other mammals use) when water temperature is very low and not much oxygen is around.
- For more cool facts about octopuses, check out <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/ten-curious-facts-about-octopuses-7625828/>