

Name _____

Blue Dragons

Do dragons exist today? Although often dismissed as a mythical creature, we actually live among several different types of “dragons.” For example, you may have seen a dragonfly hovering in a summer garden or read about a Komodo dragon lizard. The ocean has its share of dragons, too.

The blue dragon is a marine snail without a shell. It is commonly known as a blue sea slug. This particular species of marine snail can swallow a bubble of air (which it holds in its stomach) that enables it to float upside down on the surface of the ocean. The underside of the slug is blue, and its back is a grayish color. This helps to conceal it from birds flying overhead and from fish swimming below.

Blue dragons feed on poisonous man-of-war jellyfish and other similar species. When food is scarce, they will eat each other. They collect toxins from the jellyfish and store it in many finger-like structures. This ability to store poison gives them a much stronger sting than the jellyfish itself. They use this poison as a defense against predators. The sting can also be felt by people.

These creatures are rarely visible for study and observation except for when they approach land during times of onshore winds. They have been sighted in Hawaii and in tropical waters around the world. Beware of the blue dragon’s sting!

Text Questions

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph?
 - a. to give details about the topic
 - b. to introduce the subject
 - c. to introduce the author
 - d. to give examples of mythical monsters
2. What is the blue dragon’s main defense against predators?
 - a. It floats upside down in the water.
 - b. It stores poison and stings predators.
 - c. It feeds on poisonous jellyfish.
 - d. It moves to coastal waters during times of onshore winds.
3. What does the word *conceal* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a. discover
 - b. reveal
 - c. protect
 - d. hide
4. How does the coloring of the blue sea slug provide camouflage?
 - a. It floats right side up so the blue faces down in the water.
 - b. Its blue coloring makes it blend in with ocean waves.
 - c. The blue blends in with the ocean as seen from above, and the gray blends in with the ocean as seen from below.
 - d. It squirts blue poison into the water to conceal it from predators.
5. Why do you think this animal has the word *dragon* as part of its name?
