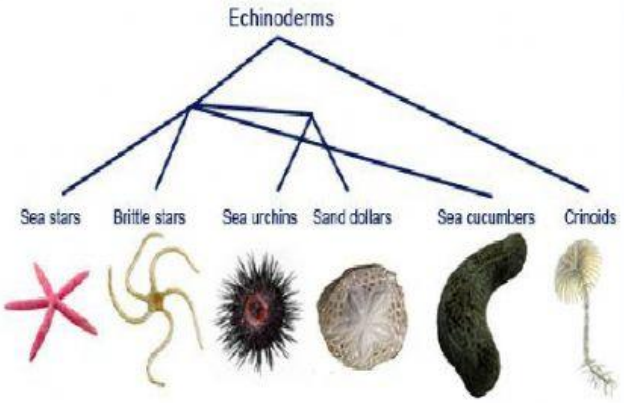
GENERAL SCIENCE

INVERTEBRATES: ECHINODERMS



Echinoderms are marine invertebrates, they live in the ocean.

They have external skeletons, a nervous system and are covered with spines that stick out from their bodies or hard plates. The **spines** of echinoderms protect them from **predators**. The spines break off easily when touched. These spines are actually a part of the animal skin. Echinoderms live only in the ocean. They use **tiny gills** to get oxygen from the sea water. Examples of echinoderms found in The Bahamas are **starfish, sand dollar, sea urchin** and **sea cucumber**. Others include **brittle star, sea feather** and **sea biscuit**.

Echinoderms do not have brains, but they have nerves that enable them to move and feed. Most adult echinoderms appear to have a shape referred to as **radial symmetry**, with five arms extending symmetry from the center of their bodies. Sea Urchins and sand dollars do not have arms like the starfish, but they have paired rows of tube feet extending symmetrically from the mouth. The mouth is at the center of the underside of the body. Many echinoderms have **powerful jaws** and **poison glands** hidden among the spines. These **adaptations** help them get food and defend themselves against predators.