

Hi there! Let's talk about how shells grow, especially the ones you find at the beach.

Shells are like homes for animals called **mollusks**. These animals, like snails and clams, live inside their hard shells.

Here's how a shell grows:

1. **The animal lives inside the shell.** It creates the shell by making a special kind of material called *calcium carbonate*, which is like chalk but hard.
2. **The animal adds new material to the edges of the shell.** As the mollusk grows bigger, it makes its shell bigger too by adding more layers at the opening or edge of the shell.
3. **The shell becomes bigger and stronger over time.** Little by little, the shell grows as the animal grows.
4. **Sometimes the shell has pretty colors and patterns!** These come from the animal's body and can make the shell look beautiful.

So, the shell is not just left there; the animal inside keeps building it to have a safe and comfy home as it grows!