

# Annelid facts for kids

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Well known species are [earthworms](#) and [leeches](#). Annelids can be found in most wet environments. Some of these species are [parasitic](#) or [mutualistic](#). This means they live together with (or inside) another organism. A mutualistic relationship is beneficial to both organisms. Their size varies from under a millimetre to about 3 metres. The largest known species is the [seep tube worm](#) (*Lamellibrachia lymnesi*), which is related to the [giant tube worm](#).

Annelids are made of one or more body segments. Each segment has one or more rings. These rings are called *annuli* (singular: 'annulus' = 'little ring'). Annelids reproduce sexually by [hermaphroditic](#) cross-fertilization. They can regenerate cut off pieces of their body. Unlike sponges, which can come back together if ripped apart. They have a hydrostatic [skeleton](#), a one-way digestion system, and [bilateral symmetry](#).

## Nervous system

Annelid worms have a nervous system. The [brain](#) forms a ring round the [pharynx](#) (throat), consisting of a pair of [ganglia](#) (local control centers) above and in front of the pharynx, linked by nerve cords either side of the pharynx to another pair of ganglia just below and behind it. In some very mobile and active [polychaetes](#) the brain is enlarged and more complex, with visible hindbrain, midbrain and forebrain sections.

The rest of the central nervous system is usually 'ladder-like', with a pair of nerve cords that run along the bottom part of the body cavity. In each segment there are paired ganglia linked by a cross-connection. From each segmental ganglion a branching system of local nerves runs into the body wall and then encircles the body.