



Build a Fish

What makes a fish, a fish? Most fish have these six things in common: **scales, eyes, fins, a mouth, gill slits, and a backbone.** Turn a ball of clay into everything it needs to be a fish.

Materials

- 1 ball of craft putty, sculpting clay, or play dough (recipe on page 2)
- 2 beads (or anything else small and round)
- 1 spoon
- Scissors
- Heavy-weight paper or construction paper
- 1 toothpick
- Marker, crayon, or colored pencil

Directions

1. **Body: Shape** a ball of craft putty, sculpting clay, or play dough into your fish's body. What shape could a fish's body be? Ovals work well, but there are also round fish, square fish, flat fish, and heart-shaped fish, too!
2. **Scales: Press** the edge of a spoon into the body over and over to create scales.
3. **Eyes: Press** two beads (or other small, round objects) into the front of the fish for eyes.
4. **Fins: Cut out** 4 small triangles and 1 large triangle from the paper. **Press** the largest triangle into the end of the fish for the tail fin. Press the other triangles into the body to make the other fins: one on the top, one on the bottom, and one on each side.
5. **Mouth:** Make a mouth by pressing a toothpick (or edge of a spoon) into the clay where you want the mouth to be.
6. **Gills:** Make gill slits by pressing the toothpick (or edge of a spoon) between the eyes and the side fins.



7. **Backbone:** Because you can't see the backbone from the outside, make an x-ray instead. **Put** your fish down on a blank piece of paper. **Draw** an outline around your fish. **Remove** your fish and **draw** a triangle for the skull, one line down the middle for the backbone, and several lines going across the body for the ribs.



Science words to learn together

Gills: delicate, feathery structures that fish use to breathe.

Scales: thin plates that cover and protect fishes' bodies.

Fins: flat body parts used for movement, steering, and balance.

Backbone: the spine; a bony structure that runs from the bottom of the skull to the pelvis; animals with a backbone are called vertebrates.

Play dough recipe

Adult supervision and assistance required.

1. Combine 1 cup of flour, 2 teaspoons cream of tartar, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup salt.
2. Add 1 cup water and 1 tablespoon cooking oil. Stir well.
3. Add food coloring of your choice.
4. Heat mixture on medium-low, stirring constantly.
5. Remove from heat when the mixture solidifies.
6. Put the play dough on wax paper and let it cool for at least 30 minutes.
7. Store in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to 2 months.