Part B

Horses and Dragons of the Sea

Article by

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**Underwater knights in armour**

A seahorse is a fish that looks like the knight in a chess set. It has a head like a horse with a long thin snout, a round body and a long tail.

The seahorse doesn't have scales like other fish. It has its skeleton on the outside—an exoskeleton. This is like a suit of armour, and it's bony to the touch. (You have your skeleton on the inside—but if you were too thin, you'd be bony to the touch too!) Because seahorses have exoskeletons, they don't have many natural enemies.

**Sea monsters**

Many years ago, people might have thought that seahorses were like real horses living underwater. Their Greek name, hippocampus, means "a horse-like sea monster". Many people thought they brought good luck.

**Eyes right!**

Seahorses do look unusual. No other fish has its head set at right angles to its body. By changing the direction of their head, most other fish change the direction in which they are swimming. Seahorses swim upright and they don't change direction easily. Their eyes can look in different directions, swivelling this way and that to spy food or danger.

**Slow and steady**

Seahorses are not strong or fast swimmers but they do have a clever way of moving up and down in the water. They have an air bladder, like a balloon, inside their bodies. More air in the air bladder means that a seahorse will rise up. Less air means that the seahorse will sink down. Their air bladders also help seahorses to swim upright.