



The Hermit Crab's Mobile Home

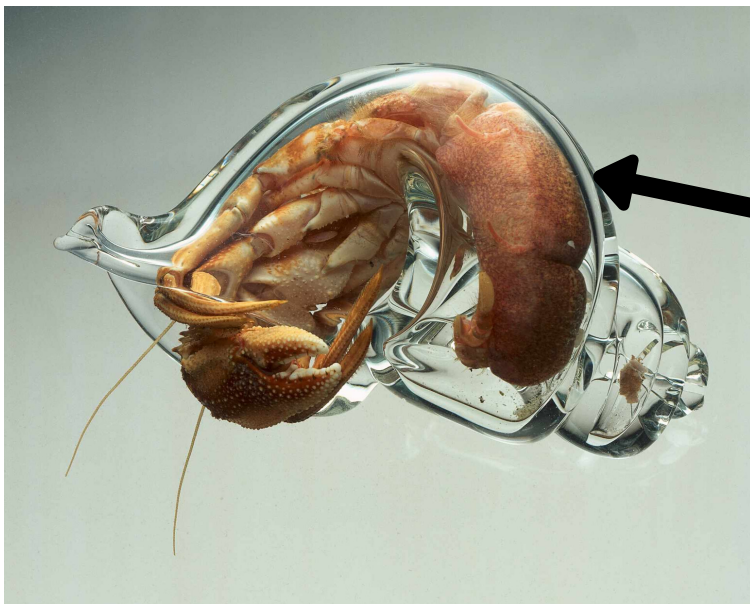
If you have ever been to a tide pool or a pet store you have probably seen a hermit crab (Paguroidea). Although hermit crabs have a hard shell to curl up in they still do not have a backbone which makes them invertebrates. Continue reading to learn more about hermit crab shells, and do a fun maze to get a hermit crab to his new shell!

Why Shells?

Just like humans outgrow their pants, hermit crabs outgrow their shells. Unlike other crabs, hermit crabs do not have a hard exoskeleton that covers their entire body, their exoskeleton is only on the front half of their body. They need a shell to cover their squishy, vulnerable, tail-like appendage.



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See how the soft part of the hermit crab curls inside the shell while their exoskeleton covered claws and legs stick out.

We thank National Geographic for this information!



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Finding a New Shell

The hermit crab has an interesting way of exchanging shells. When a new shell is spotted by many hermit crabs, they line up by size. Then once the line is completed and everyone is ready to transfer shells the largest crab hops into the free shell, the second largest crab hops into the largest crab's old shell, and so on. This works the same as how humans get hand-me-down clothes.

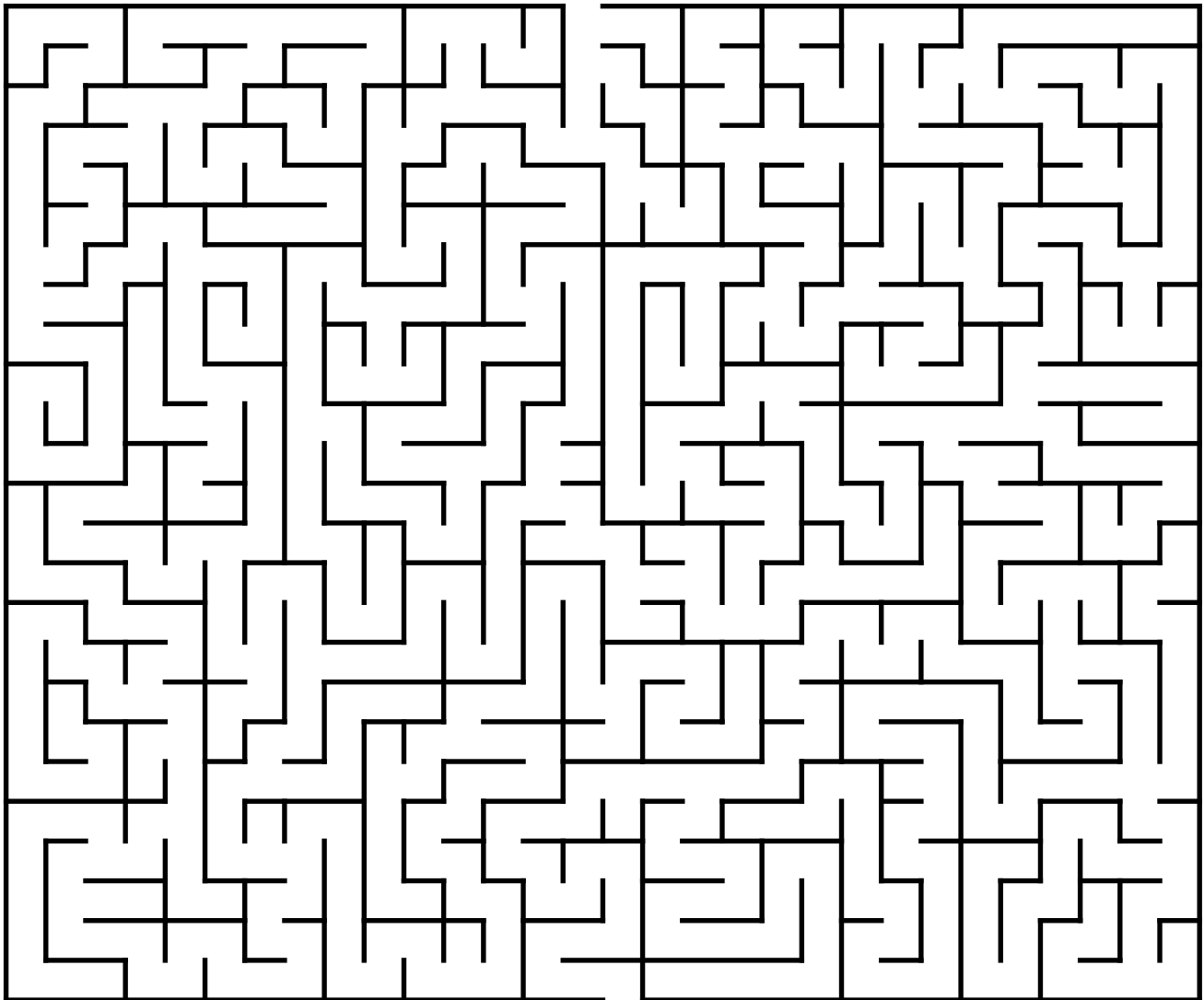
Help Dexter Find a Shell!

On the next page, Dexter the hermit crab has a shell right now that is too small for his body. Lead him through the maze to connect him with a larger, more comfortable shell.

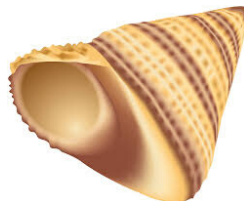
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Help Dexter Find a New Shell!



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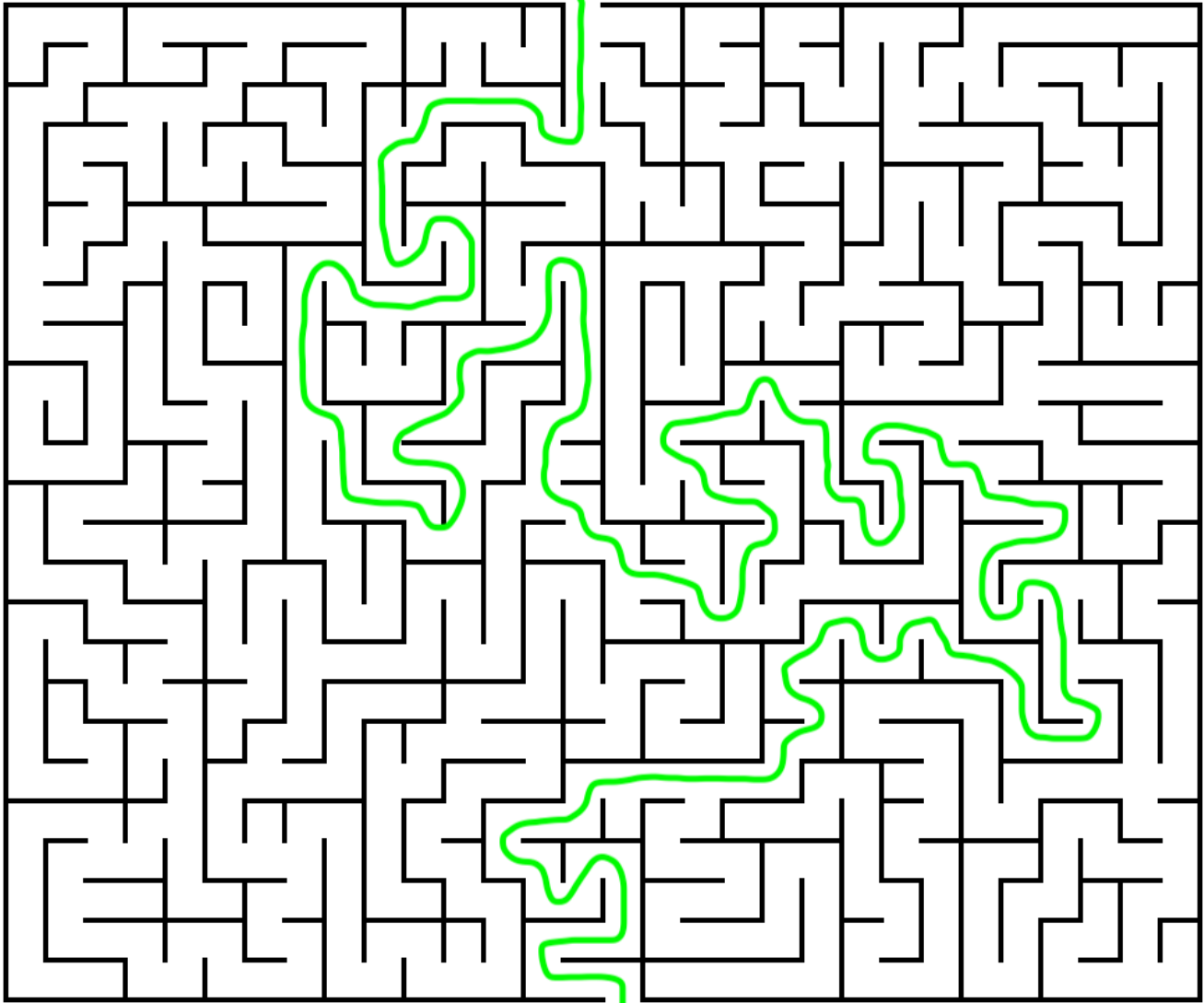


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Maze Key



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