

Science Explore Activity: Plant and Animal Cells

What is the Basic Unit of Life?

All living things are made up of **Cells**. Cells are the smallest thing capable of life. Most cells are very small, so small, in fact, that they cannot be seen with the naked eye; but there are some single cells that are so large that you can hold them in your hand. The largest single cell in the world is the Ostrich egg.

There are two types of cells in the world: Plant and Animal. Both types have many similarities in how they maintain life but each has something different that allows them to do special things.

The first type of cell is an animal cell. Animal cells are made up of a **Nucleus**, other **Organelles**, and a **Membrane**. Animal cells can bend and change their shape. Animal cells get their energy and vitamins by eating other things.

The second type of cell is the plant cell. Plant cells have all the same parts as animal cells but they have a two pieces that animal cells do not have: A **cell wall** and **chloroplasts**. Chloroplasts turn sunlight into energy for the cell, that way the cell does not have to try to find something else to eat. Cell walls are a hard cover that surrounds a plant cell outside of the cell membrane. The cell wall gives the cell a definite shape.

Cell: The most basic form of life.

Nucleus: The control center of a cell.

Organelle: parts of cells that do special jobs.

Membrane: flexible cover that holds a cell together

Cell Wall: A hard, rigid, cover that surrounds plant cells

Chloroplast: A special organelle that houses chlorophyll, something that turns sunlight into energy.

