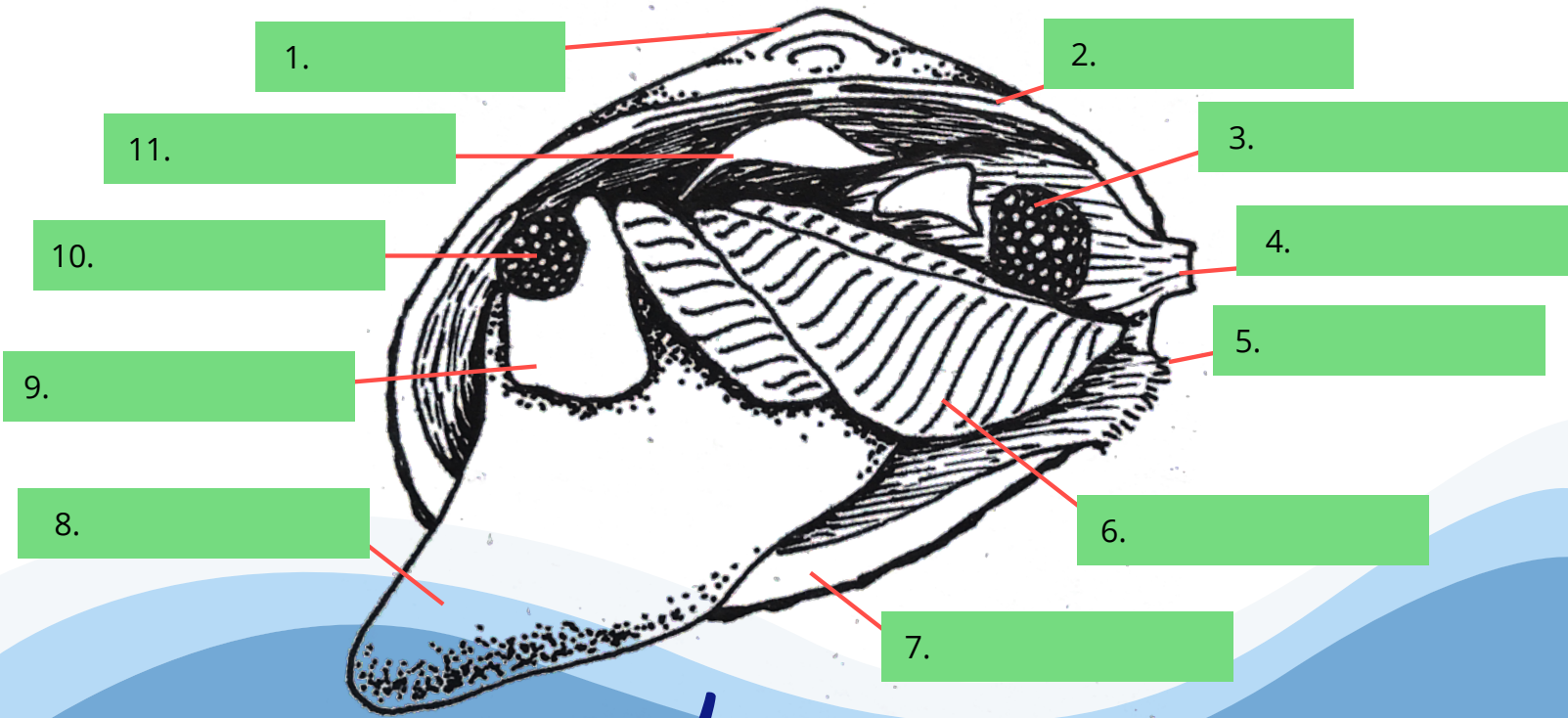


# The Anatomy of the Mussel

Label the mussel using the word bank below.

Foot • Digestive Tract • Umbo • Mantle • Gills • Excurrent Siphon • Incurrent Siphon  
Posterior Adductor Muscle • Anterior Adductor Muscle • Ligament • Mouth



## Helpful Hints:



As you already know, mussels have two shells which are held together by a hinge. That hinge has an elastic ligament which helps keep the hinge stable. Near the hinge, there is a prominent hump called the umbo. To close its shells, the mussel uses two special muscles called the posterior adductor (closest to the excurrent siphon) and the anterior adductor (closest to the mouth). The part of the mussel responsible for creating its shell is called the mantle. The foot, responsible for digging into the river bottom, is touching the mantle in this illustration.

To figure out the other parts of the mussel, we have to understand how the mussel eats. Freshwater mussels are **filter feeders**. This means the mussel sits on the river bottom and passively allows the river's current to bring food to it. The mussel uses its incurrent siphon to suck water (full of sediment, bits of plants, tiny insects, and chemicals like oxygen) into its body. The water then passes over the gills and the mussel extracts oxygen from the it. Once the water passes the gills, it goes to the mouth where the mussel eats the food particles. Next, the food and water passes through the digestive tract. Clear water exits through the excurrent siphon.