

Shark Teeth

Audience: 2nd-5th grade

Duration: 15-20 minutes

STEM Process Skills: Observation

Learning Objectives/Goals:

The student will be able to identify various shark species based on their tooth structure.

TEKS: Science 2.10A, 3.10A, 4.10A, 5.10A

NGSS: 4-LS1-1

Ocean Literacy Principles: 5, 6

Vocabulary: denticles, prey

Description: This activity teaches students to identify shark species based on their tooth structure.

Materials: One student data sheet per group, scissors

Procedure:

- Have students cut out the shark teeth below.
- Select one tooth to identify.
- Start in the first box and compare the features of the tooth to the description.
- Choose the best answer and proceed to the box indicated until the type of shark is identified.

Background

Sharks have several rows of teeth called denticles. Generally, only the single row along the margin of the jaws is functional at any one time. The others are reserves, constantly moving forward to replace worn or missing teeth. Sharks can have up to 30,000 teeth throughout their lifetimes. Each shark species has teeth specially designed to bite, tear, or crush its prey. Sharks that crush shellfish, crabs, and lobsters have flat teeth, while those that cut up

fish and squid have sharp teeth with saw-like edges. Sharks that grab fish and swallow them whole have spear-like teeth. Scientists are often able to determine the species of a shark simply by identifying a tooth.

Extensions

- Ask students to research the types of food that the sharks below eat. How would each shark's tooth shape help it catch its prey?
- Use the OCEARCH shark tracker with your class to find where real sharks are today.

Additional Resources:

www.ocearch.org

www.iucnredlist.org



