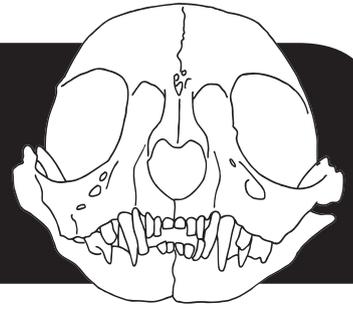


Teeth and Eating

The truth about teeth



This trail explores how animals have different shaped teeth for eating different types of food. There are three main types of teeth: incisors, canines and molars.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>front view side view</p> | | |
| <p>incisors (front teeth) are used for slicing</p> | <p>canines are used for piercing and tearing</p> | <p>molars (back teeth) are used for grinding</p> |

Omnivores

Animals that eat plants and meat are called **omnivores**. They have incisors, canines and molars.

Gallery 1 Find the **baboon** in **case 21**. Baboons eat many different types of food, from leaves and fruit to insects, lizards and eggs. Their large canines help them to tear meat and their molars crush and grind plants and insects.

Draw a line to match the types of teeth to the correct pictures.

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| molars | canines |
| | |
| incisors | |

Explore some more

► Tusks are long canines or incisors that animals use for reasons other than eating.

As you walk around the Museum, how many animals can you spot with tusks?

What do you think they might use them for? _____

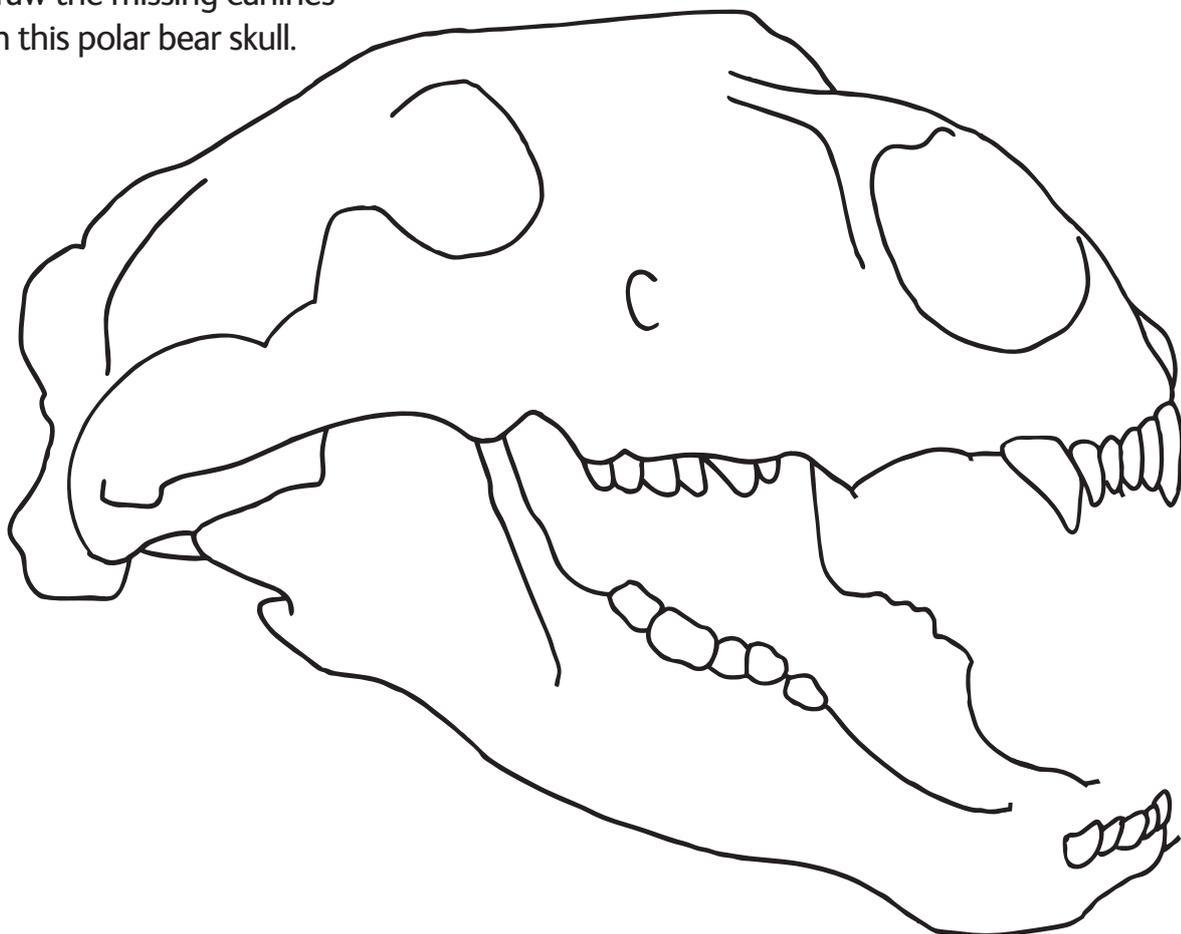
Carnivores

Meat-eaters or carnivores have incisors and canines.

Gallery 1

Look at the **polar bear** skull in **case 17**. Polar bears mainly eat seals, using their large canines for piercing and ripping through flesh. What shape are these teeth?

Draw the missing canines on this polar bear skull.



Gallery 1

Now find the **wolf** in **case 17** and have a close look at the teeth behind the canines. Would those teeth be better for tearing meat or grinding plants?

Complete the missing letters in the sentence below.

The wolf does not have flat molars for grinding, so it must be a vore.

Gallery 3

Find the **ray** in **case 4**. Rays have teeth that interlock, which means the teeth fit together. They can be used for grasping or crushing food.

Circle the foods you think a ray might eat.

small fish  crabs  seaweed  shrimp 

Do you think a ray is a carnivore, herbivore or omnivore?

Gallery 3

Now look behind you at the **crocodiles**.

Crocodiles cannot chew, so they swallow smaller prey whole and tear larger prey into pieces using their teeth.

Tick the sentences that are true to describe a crocodile's teeth.

- pointed sharp wide and broad round all the same size
 different sizes can be seen when crocodile closes mouth

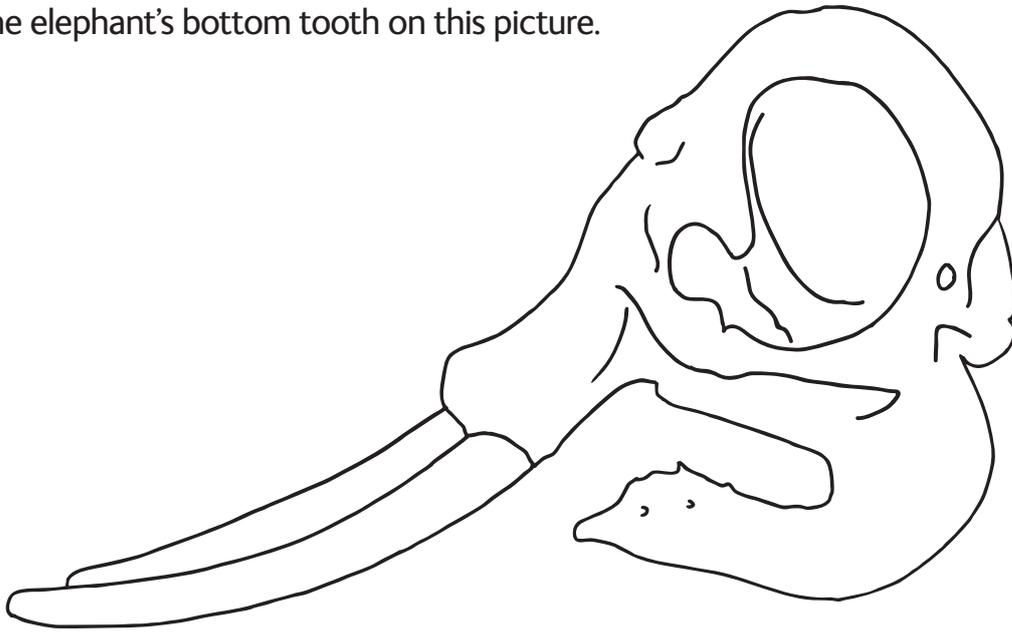
Herbivores

Plant-eaters or herbivores have incisors and molars.

Gallery 3

Find the **elephant** skulls. Elephants eat grass, leaves and branches. They have broad, flat molars to grind up their tough, chewy food.

Draw the elephant's bottom tooth on this picture.



Gallery 5

Find the **giraffe** in **case 34**. Giraffes use their incisors, strong lips and long tongues to strip leaves and branches from trees. They grind up their food with their back molars.

Look at the giraffe skull. Which teeth does a giraffe not have?

Gallery 6

Rodents have large front teeth that grow throughout their life. In the gallery, find the **capybara** or the **Argentine plains viscacha** in **cases 22** and **23**.

Which teeth can you see?

canines



incisors



molars



What do you think these teeth are specially adapted to do?

mash fruit



gnaw wood



tear meat



Why do you think their incisors grow all through their life?

Explore some more

Gallery 6

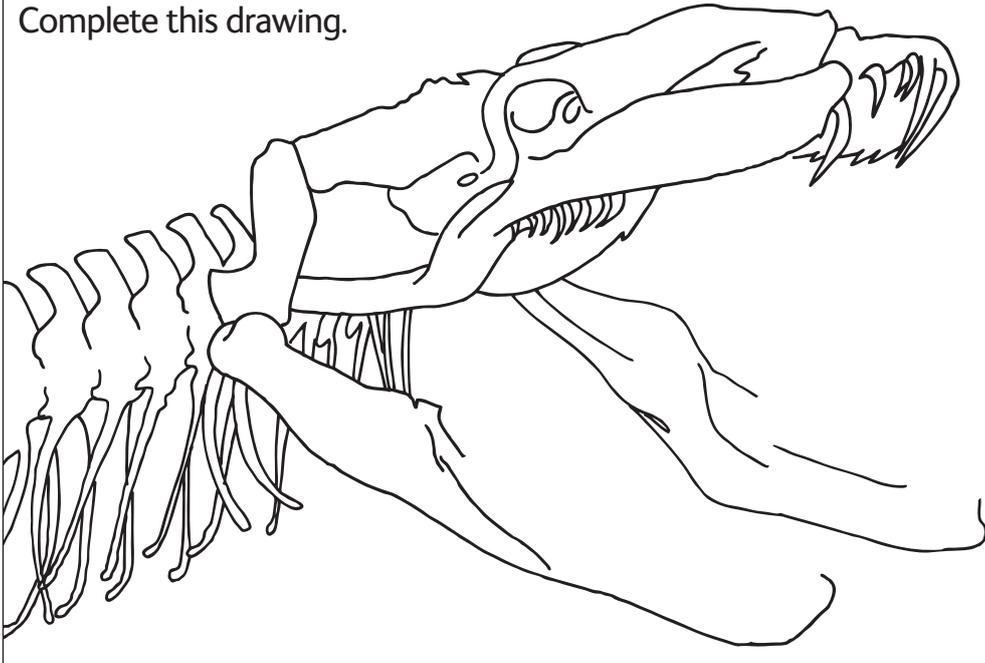
Find the **giant anteater** in **case 16** and read the label on the wall.

Anteaters have no teeth at all. How do you think they get ants into their mouth?

Gallery 6

Now look at the **python** in **case 68**. A **reticulated python** has very sharp teeth that curve backwards. The teeth hook into and hold prey while the snake wraps its body around the prey to suffocate it.

Complete this drawing.



Now that you have discovered all about teeth, fill in the missing words in the table below.

| Tooth shape | Diet | Name |
|--|------------------------------|-----------|
| Molars – sharp and shearing, Canines – large and pointed | | Carnivore |
| Molars – rough and bumpy, Canines – (generally) missing | | |
| Molars – rough and bumpy, Canines – large and pointed | Plant-eaters and meat-eaters | |

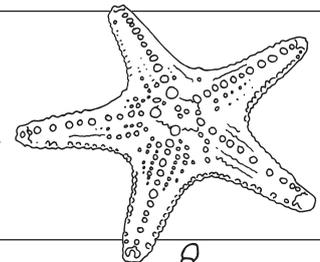
Explore some more

► Some of the invertebrates (animals without backbones) in **Gallery 3** have unusual ways of feeding.

► Find the **starfish**.

Some starfish can push their stomach out through their mouth to cover their prey in stomach juices. This dissolves the prey to make it easier to digest.

How many different types of starfish can you see?



► Find the **spiders**.

Spiders catch their prey with the leg-like pedipalps near their mouth, then inject venom into the prey using their fangs.

Are the spider's pedipalps like the scorpion's pincers? **yes/no**

