

Nova's Tooth Investigation

Learning objective: To identify and describe the functions of different types of human teeth and understand how to maintain good oral hygiene.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of human teeth and dental health to provide your answers. Remember to use scientific vocabulary.

Nova the barn owl is fascinated by how different animals use their teeth to eat. While humans are omnivores, we have three specific types of teeth designed for different jobs: incisors for cutting, canines for tearing, and molars for grinding. Just like Nova needs her feathers to be in top condition to fly, we need to keep our teeth healthy by brushing away plaque to prevent decay.

Word bank: incisors · canines · molars · enamel · plaque · decay · carnivore · herbivore

1. Nova wants to know which teeth are at the front of your mouth and are used for biting and cutting into food. Name this type of tooth. (1 mark)

2. Explain the job of the molars. Why are they shaped the way they are? (2 marks)

3. If you do not brush your teeth properly, a sticky substance called plaque can build up. Describe what plaque can do to your teeth over time. (2 marks)

4. Look at the list of teeth: Incisors, Canines, Molars. Which type would a lion use to tear meat, and which type would a cow use to grind grass? (2 marks)

5. Max the monkey is eating an apple. Describe how he uses all three types of teeth to finish his snack. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of a human mouth. Label the incisors, canines, and molars in their correct positions. Use different colours to show where each type of tooth is located.



Extension challenge: Research why humans lose their 'baby' teeth and grow a second set of 'adult' teeth. Write a short paragraph explaining this process to Nova.