

Nova's Guide to Healthy Teeth

Learning objective: To identify and describe the functions of different types of human teeth and explain how to maintain dental hygiene.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Ensure you use full sentences for your responses.

Nova the barn owl has been observing human habits from the treetops. She has discovered that humans possess three main types of teeth, each with a specific purpose. Incisors, the sharp, chisel-like teeth at the front, are designed for biting into crisp apples. Beside them, the pointed canines act like tiny hooks to tear through tougher food. Finally, the broad molars at the back of the jaw act like grinding stones to crush food into smaller pieces, which is the vital first stage of digestion. Protecting these teeth is essential. The outer layer, called enamel, is the hardest substance in the body, but it can be damaged by acid produced when bacteria feast on leftover sugar. If we consume too many sugary snacks or fizzy drinks, this acid erodes the enamel, leading to decay. Nova suggests that brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and flossing are the best defences. By maintaining excellent oral hygiene, we ensure our teeth remain strong enough to last a lifetime. Remember, just like Nova's sharp beak, our teeth are unique tools that require careful maintenance to function perfectly.

Word bank: incisors · canines · molars · enamel · bacteria · hygiene · digestion

1. Identify the three types of human teeth mentioned in the text and describe the primary function of each. (3 marks)

2. According to the passage, what is the 'hardest substance in the body' and why is it vulnerable to damage? (2 marks)

3. Why is it important to crush food into smaller pieces before it travels further into the digestive system? (2 marks)

4. Explain why consuming sugary snacks is particularly harmful to the enamel of our teeth. (2 marks)

5. Nova argues that teeth are 'unique tools'. Do you agree with this description? Justify your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of a human mouth showing the positions of the incisors, canines, and molars. Label each type of tooth and draw a small picture of the type of food each tooth is best at eating.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the teeth of a human with the beak of Nova the owl. Why might their structures be different based on their diets? Justify your answer and consider what might happen if a human had a beak instead of teeth.