

Nova's Tooth Investigation: Understanding Our Teeth

Learning objective: To 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 biology to answer. Ensure you use scientific vocabulary where appropriate.

Nova the owl has been observing how different animals use their teeth. Now, she wants to know if you can identify how humans use theirs to eat a healthy, balanced diet.

Word bank: incisors · canines · premolars · molars · enamel · plaque · decay · dentin · gums

1. Nova is eating a crunchy apple. Which type of teeth does she use to bite into the apple, and what is their primary function? (2 marks)

2. Explain the difference in function between canine teeth and molar teeth. Why might a human need both? (3 marks)

3. If a child buys a sugary snack for £1.25 and does not brush their teeth afterwards, what is the risk to their teeth? Explain the role of plaque in this process. (3 marks)

4. Label the following teeth types based on their position in the mouth: Which teeth are located at the very back of the mouth, and what is their job? (2 marks)

5. Why is the hard, outer layer of our teeth, called enamel, so important for our long-term health? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of the human mouth and label the four main types of teeth: incisors, canines, premolars, and molars. Use different colours to show where each type is positioned.



Extension challenge: Research why wisdom teeth are often considered 'vestigial' in modern humans. Write three sentences explaining why our ancestors might have needed them, but we often do not.