Bea's Brilliant Bite: Understanding Our Teeth

Learning objective: To identify and describe the functions of different types of human teeth in the digestive system.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions using full sentences. Refer back to the text to support your answers.

Bea the honeybee loves to buzz around the garden, but she is also fascinated by how humans eat. Did you know that your teeth are the first stage of your digestive system? Humans have four distinct types of teeth, each with a specific job. At the front of your mouth are the incisors; these are sharp and chisel-shaped, perfect for biting into a crisp apple. Next to them are the pointed canines, which are designed for tearing food. Further back, you will find the premolars and molars. These teeth have broader, flatter surfaces that act like little grinding stones, crushing food into smaller pieces so it is easier to swallow. This process is called mastication. Protecting these teeth is a hard, shiny substance called enamel, which is the toughest material in the human body. However, sugary snacks can damage this protective layer. By brushing twice a day and visiting a dentist, you ensure your teeth stay strong. Just like Bea collects nectar to fuel her hive, your teeth break down food to fuel your body with the energy it needs to learn and play.

Word bank: incisors · canines · premolars · molars · enamel · digestion · mastication

1. According to the text, which type of tooth is used for biting into a crisp apple? (1 mark)

2. What is the primary function of the premolars and molars? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author mention that enamel is the 'toughest material in the human body'? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, why might a dentist advise someone to reduce their sugar intake? (2 marks)

5. Do you think it is important to have all four types of teeth? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the passage. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of a human mouth and label the different types of teeth (incisors, canines, premolars, and molars) showing where each one is positioned.

Extension challenge: Research what happens to food after it leaves the mouth. Create a flow chart showing the journey of a piece of food through the digestive system.