Nova’s Dental Discovery: A Science Fact-File

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

Nova the owl is curious about how we eat! Use your science knowledge to complete this fact-file. Research the functions of different teeth and explain how they help us digest our food. Write clearly and ensure you use scientific terminology.

Word bank: incisors · canines · premolars · molars · mastication · enamel · digestion · herbivore · carnivore · omnivore

1. Identify the four main types of human teeth. Briefly describe the specific function of each type during the process of digestion. (4 marks)

2. Nova wants to know why our teeth have different shapes. Explain how the shape of a canine tooth is suited to its role compared to a molar tooth. (3 marks)

3. What is the role of the protective outer layer of the tooth, and what happens if this layer is damaged by sugary foods? (2 marks)

4. Compare the teeth of a primary school child to those of an adult. How many sets of teeth do humans typically grow in their lifetime? (2 marks)

5. If a creature only eats plants, which type of teeth would you expect to be the most prominent in its jaw? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Extension challenge: Research why some animals have different dental structures based on their diet. Write a short paragraph explaining how a lion's teeth differ from a cow's teeth.