

ANIMAL INSTINCTS

When it comes to teeth, we're not as different from animals as you might think. Our teeth aren't as sharp or scary as shark chompers, but they are shaped to cut and tear food in the same way. Check out these animal teeth to see how we're the same – and how we're totally different!



great white sharks

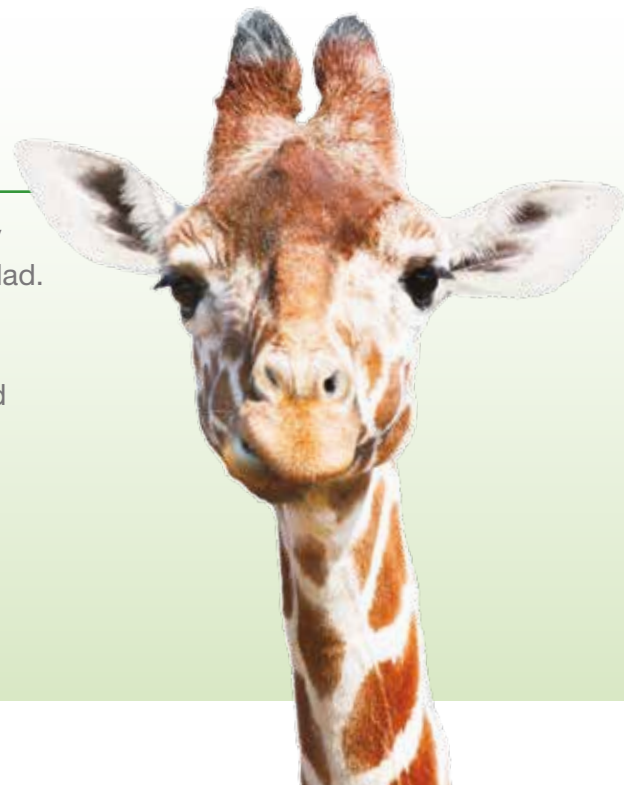
How we're the same: Those sharp teeth may not seem much like ours at first, but they're shaped like triangles to make it easier to cut food – just like the pointed teeth we have called canine teeth.

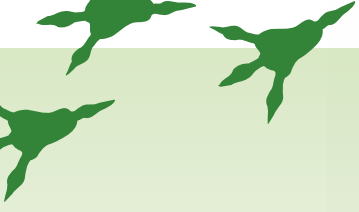
How we're different: Great white sharks have rows and rows of teeth that fall out much more often than ours do. A single shark can grow up to 20,000 teeth in its first 25 years of life! We only grow 20 baby teeth and up to 32 permanent teeth. **(Psst – check out page 18 for a tooth tracker to help you keep tabs on your teeth!)**

giraffes

How we're the same: Giraffes eat a lot of leaves. That's why they have wide, flat teeth meant for grinding up a gigantic salad. They also have 32 teeth, similar to us!

How we're different: Instead of having top front teeth (called “incisors”) like we do, giraffes have a “horny pad” that helps them mash plants and grass and grind it down against their bottom teeth.





tyrannosaurus rex

How we're the same: Tyrannosaurus rex used its fangs the same way we do – to cut food and shred meat. Instead of eating hamburgers and chicken, though, T. rex preferred to munch on other dinosaurs!

How we're different: T. rex had about 60 teeth that were up to 9 inches long. Check that out on a ruler – those are some big teeth!



narwhals

How we're the same: The narwhal is a type of whale. It has teeth that are made from the same general parts as ours – hard enamel, sensitive stuff called dentin, and blood and nerves called pulp.

How we're different: Instead of growing inside of its mouth, the narwhal's tooth sticks up like a unicorn horn. Although their teeth are made from the same stuff as ours, they're still very different. All of the hard material is on the inside of the narwhal's tooth while all of the sensitive tissue called dentin is on the outside.