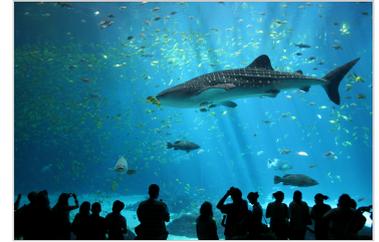


# Sharks - Ocean Predators

ESL Reading Worksheet — Level F | [tahricteaches.com](http://tahricteaches.com)



Sharks are amazing ocean **predators** that have lived on Earth for over four hundred million years. These ancient fish existed even before the dinosaurs roamed our planet long ago. There are more than five hundred different **species** of sharks swimming in oceans around the world today. They range from the tiny dwarf lantern shark to the massive whale shark measuring forty feet long. Sharks play a **crucial** role in keeping ocean ecosystems healthy and balanced for all marine life.

Sharks have incredible senses that make them perfect hunters in the deep ocean waters. They can smell a single drop of blood in the water from almost a mile away easily. Special sensors called **ampullae** detect the electrical signals that all living creatures produce naturally. Their hearing is so sensitive they can hear fish swimming from great **distances** underwater. Some sharks can even sense changes in water pressure to locate prey hiding nearby them.

Unlike most fish, sharks have **skeletons** made of cartilage instead of hard bone material. Cartilage is the same flexible material found in your ears and nose right now. This lighter skeleton helps sharks swim faster and turn more quickly while hunting food. Sharks constantly lose and replace their teeth throughout their entire **lifetime** naturally. A single shark may grow over thirty thousand teeth during its life in the ocean.

Many people fear sharks because of scary movies, but shark attacks are actually very rare. Humans kill about one hundred million sharks every year for their fins and meat products. This overfishing has made many shark species **endangered** and close to extinction permanently. Some countries have banned shark finning to protect these important ocean animals from disappearing. Scientists work hard to educate people about the true nature of these **misunderstood** creatures.

Sharks are essential for healthy oceans and deserve our protection and respect today. They control fish populations by eating sick and weak animals, keeping species strong overall. Without sharks, the entire ocean food chain would collapse and cause massive **environmental** problems worldwide. Marine parks and protected areas help shark populations recover from years of overfishing damage. Learning about sharks helps us appreciate their beauty and importance to our planet's oceans.

## A. Vocabulary

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|------------------------|--|
| 1. predators ____      | a. wrongly judged or interpreted             |
| 2. species ____        | b. animals that hunt other animals for food  |
| 3. crucial ____        | c. relating to the natural world             |
| 4. ampullae ____       | d. groups of similar living things           |
| 5. distances ____      | e. the entire time something is alive        |
| 6. skeletons ____      | f. at risk of dying out completely           |
| 7. lifetime ____       | g. the bone or cartilage framework of bodies |
| 8. endangered ____     | h. how far apart things are                  |
| 9. misunderstood ____  | i. extremely important or necessary          |
| 10. environmental ____ | j. sensors that detect electrical signals    |

## B. True or False

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- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Sharks have existed for over 400 million years. _____ | 2. There are about 100 species of sharks. _____       | 3. Sharks can smell blood from almost a mile away. _____      |
| 4. Humans kill about 100 million sharks per year. _____  | 5. Shark skeletons are made of hard bone. _____       | 6. Sharks may grow over 30,000 teeth in their lifetime. _____ |
| 7. Sharks are not important for ocean health. _____      | 8. Cartilage is the same material in your ears. _____ | 9. Shark attacks on humans are very common. _____             |

## C. Fill in the Blanks

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**Word Bank:** predators, species, crucial, distances, skeletons, endangered, misunderstood

1. Sharks are amazing ocean \_\_\_\_\_ that have lived for millions of years.
2. There are more than five hundred different \_\_\_\_\_ of sharks in the world.
3. Sharks play a \_\_\_\_\_ role in keeping ocean ecosystems healthy.
4. Shark \_\_\_\_\_ are made of cartilage instead of hard bone.
5. Scientists work to educate people about these \_\_\_\_\_ creatures.

## D. Comprehension Questions

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1. How long have sharks existed on Earth?
2. What special sensors do sharks have and what do they detect?
3. Why is a cartilage skeleton helpful for sharks?
4. How many sharks do humans kill each year?
5. Why are sharks important for healthy ocean ecosystems?

## E. Discussion Questions

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1. Why do you think people are often afraid of sharks?
2. What can humans do to help protect shark populations?
3. Would you like to swim with sharks in the ocean? Why or why not?

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## Answer Key

**A. Vocabulary:** 1-d, 2-e, 3-f, 4-g, 5-b, 6-h, 7-c, 8-i, 9-a, 10-j

**B. True/False:** 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-T, 5-F, 6-T, 7-F, 8-T, 9-F

**C. Fill Blanks:** 1-predators, 2-species, 3-crucial, 4-skeletons, 5-misunderstood

**D. Comprehension:** 1. Over 400 million years; 2. Ampullae - they detect electrical signals from living creatures; 3. It's lighter and helps them swim faster and turn quickly; 4. About 100 million; 5. They control fish populations by eating sick/weak animals