



The Shark — Ancient Predator of the Ocean

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

The shark is one of the oldest and most successful **creatures** on Earth. Sharks have existed for more than 400 million years — long before the dinosaurs, and even before the first trees grew on land. Today there are over 500 species, ranging from the tiny dwarf lantern shark, small enough to hold in one hand, to the enormous whale shark, which can grow longer than a school bus. This incredible variety has helped sharks **survive** through five mass extinctions.

A shark's body is perfectly built for hunting. Unlike most fish, a shark has no bones at all; its skeleton is made of light, flexible cartilage, the same material found in your ears and nose. This makes the shark fast and **efficient** in the water. Its most famous weapon is its **jaw**, lined with rows of razor-sharp teeth. A large shark has a **powerful** bite and may grow and replace tens of thousands of teeth over its lifetime.

Sharks are among the greatest hunters in the ocean because of their amazing senses. A shark can **sense** a single drop of blood in a huge volume of water. Even more remarkable, sharks can **detect** the tiny amounts of **electricity** that all living animals naturally produce. Special organs in the shark's snout allow it to find prey hiding under the sand, even in complete darkness.

As top predators, sharks **hunt** the weak, old, and sick animals of the sea. This keeps fish populations healthy and balanced. Without sharks, the entire ocean food web can fall apart. Scientists have found that when sharks vanish from an area, some other species multiply too quickly and damage the environment. In this way, sharks act as the guardians of a healthy ocean.

Sadly, the animal that has survived for hundreds of millions of years is now in serious danger. Humans kill an estimated 100 million sharks every year, mostly for their fins. This **threatens** many species with extinction. Because sharks grow slowly and have very few babies, their numbers cannot recover quickly. Protecting sharks is not about saving a scary monster — it is about protecting the balance of the oceans that all life depends on.

A. Vocabulary

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| 1. creature _____ | a. to discover or notice the presence of something |
| 2. survive _____ | b. having great strength or force |
| 3. efficient _____ | c. to chase and catch animals for food |

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 4. jaw ____ | d. to be likely to cause harm or danger to something |
| 5. powerful ____ | e. working well without wasting time or energy |
| 6. sense ____ | f. either of the two bony parts of the mouth that hold the teeth |
| 7. detect ____ | g. to become aware of something through the body's natural abilities |
| 8. electricity ____ | h. a form of energy that can flow through things and power machines |
| 9. hunt ____ | i. a living thing, especially an animal |
| 10. threaten ____ | j. to continue to live, especially through difficult conditions |



B. True or False

1. Sharks have existed for more than 400 million years. ____
2. A shark's skeleton is made of heavy bone. ____
3. A shark's skeleton is made of light, flexible cartilage. ____
4. Sharks can replace their teeth many times during their lives. ____
5. Sharks can detect the electricity made by living animals. ____
6. Sharks mainly hunt the strongest and healthiest animals. ____
7. Without sharks, the ocean food web can fall apart. ____
8. Humans kill about 100 million sharks each year. ____
9. Sharks grow quickly and have many babies. ____



C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: survive, jaw, detect, hunt, threaten

1. Sharks have managed to _____ through five mass extinctions.
2. A shark's _____ is lined with rows of razor-sharp teeth.
3. Sharks can _____ the tiny amounts of electricity that animals produce.
4. As top predators, sharks _____ the weak, old, and sick animals of the sea.
5. The loss of so many sharks could _____ the balance of the entire ocean.

D. Comprehension Questions

1. What makes sharks such an ancient and successful group of animals?
2. Describe how a shark's body is suited for hunting.
3. Explain two special senses that make sharks excellent hunters.
4. Why are sharks important for the health of the ocean?
5. What is threatening sharks today, and why is it hard for them to recover?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Many people fear sharks because of movies and news stories. Do you think this fear is fair? Why or why not?
2. Sharks kill very few people each year, yet people kill millions of sharks. What does this tell us about the relationship between humans and nature?
3. If you could create one rule to protect sharks, what would it be, and how would you convince people to follow it?



Answer Key

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

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

C. Fill Blanks: 1-survive, 2-jaw, 3-detect, 4-hunt, 5-threaten

D. Comprehension:

1. Sharks are ancient and successful because they have existed for over 400 million years and evolved into more than 500 species, from tiny lantern sharks to giant whale sharks, surviving five mass extinctions.
2. A shark has a lightweight skeleton made of flexible cartilage instead of bone, which makes it fast and efficient, and a powerful jaw lined with rows of razor-sharp, constantly replaced teeth.
3. A shark can sense a single drop of blood in a huge volume of water, and it can detect the tiny amounts of electricity produced by living animals, letting it find prey hidden under the sand or in the dark.
4. As top predators, sharks hunt weak, old, and sick animals, which keeps fish populations balanced. Without them, some species multiply too quickly and damage the whole ocean food web.
5. Humans kill about 100 million sharks each year, mostly for their fins, which threatens many species with extinction. Sharks recover slowly because they grow slowly and have very few babies.