

Be a Tooth Sleuth

SLEUTH MISSION:

Determine what a mammal eats by looking at its teeth.

OBJECTIVE
Determine which mammals are

- **Carnivores**
- **Herbivores**
- **Omnivores**

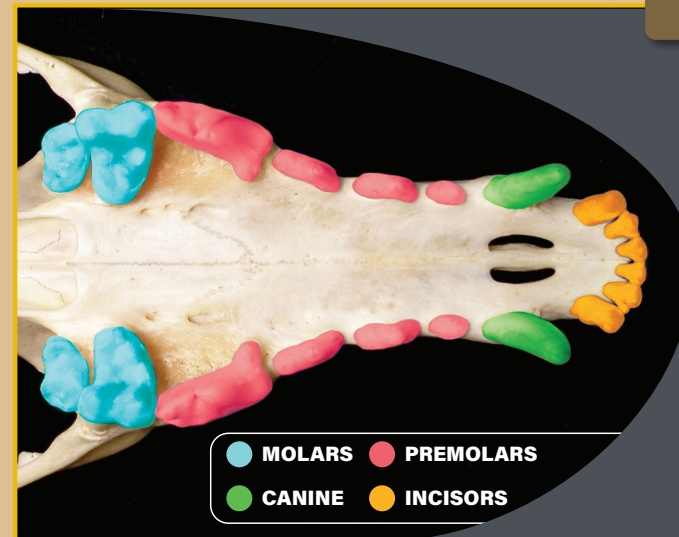
What you need to know

Types of teeth

- **Incisors**—small and chisel-like; used for nipping, gnawing, or scraping
- **Canines**—long, stout, and conical; used for catching, puncturing, holding, and killing
- **Premolars & Molars** (cheek teeth)—used for shearing, crushing, and grinding

Feeding Habits

- **Carnivore**—eats animals, has large canines, has premolars and molars for shearing
- **Herbivore**—eats plants, has premolars and molars for grinding
- **Omnivore**—eats both plants and animals, has premolars and molars for grinding and shearing



BOBCAT



Sleuth Clues

- Canine teeth are large.
- Premolars have shearing surfaces.
- One very small molar is found on each side.

RACCOON



- Canine teeth are large.
- Premolars and molars have both shearing and grinding surfaces.

BEAVER



Sleuth Clues

- Incisors are very large and chisel-like for gnawing.
- Canine teeth are absent.
- Premolar and molars are flat with many folds.

COYOTE



- Canine teeth are large.
- Upper premolars have sharp shearing surfaces.
- Upper molars have flattened surfaces.

VIRGINIA OPOSSUM



Sleuth Clues

- Ten very small upper incisors are found in the upper jaw.
- Canine teeth are large.
- Premolars and molars have both shearing and grinding surfaces.

WHITE-TAILED DEER



- Upper incisors and canine teeth are absent.
- Premolars and molars have tall cusps for grinding.

Authors

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Sleuth Solutions

Carnivores—coyote and bobcat
Herbivores—beaver and white-tailed deer
Omnivores—Virginia opossum and raccoon