Teeth and their jobs: answers and notes

What your child practised: naming incisors, canines and molars, saying what each one does, and seeing how animals' teeth suit their food (Year 4 science: teeth and digestion).

Page 1 · Warm up

molar · **incisor** · **canine**

Page 2 · Try it together

Answers will vary: often **4** incisors and **2** canines on top. Incisors are flat and **bit** the apple; canines are pointy; molars are wide and bumpy and **chewed** it.

Page 2 · A. Name the teeth

a incisor · **b** canine · **c** molar
4 incisors, **2** canines, **6** molars

Page 3 · B. Which teeth?

Sandwich: **incisors** · Cereal: **molars**
Chicken leg: **canines** · Carrot into mush: **molars**

Page 3 · C. Whose teeth?

1 **sheep** · 2 **lion** · 3 **person**
The lion has long, pointy canines to grip and tear meat. The sheep has no top front teeth (a hard pad) and wide, flat molars to grind grass.

Page 3 · D. Fill the gaps

incisors, **cut** · **canines**, **tear** · **molars**, **grind**

Challenge: No. The pointy teeth that grip and tear are her **canines**. Her **molars** are the wide, bumpy back teeth that **grind** food.

Watch out for

- **Mixing up which teeth cut, tear and grind.** Link each shape to its job: a thin edge **cuts** like scissors, a point **grips and tears**, and a wide, bumpy top **grinds** like a rolling pin on crumbs.
- **Premolars.** Some books show premolars between the canines and molars. They replace the milk molars later, and grind food too.

Going further (5 minutes, no paper)

- **Tooth talk at teatime:** guess which teeth will do the most work for each food, then check as you eat.
- **Animal teeth:** a cat or dog has big canines; a rabbit has big incisors for nibbling plants.
- **In the game:** Chapter 2, Tooth Squad, is about keeping teeth healthy: sugar, brushing and the dentist.