

Shark Facts

There are almost 400 different kinds of sharks. Each kind of shark looks different, has a unique diet, and behaves differently. There are sharks in the four oceans of the world. Some sharks are longer than a school bus, while others are so small they can live in fish tanks. Sharks come in all kinds of colors. Most of the time, their skin color helps them blend in with their surroundings. But, some sharks that live in the deepest part of the ocean actually have parts that glow in the dark. Most sharks live in salt water, but some can live in fresh water.

Sharks are actually a type of fish. There are some similarities as well as differences between sharks and typical fish. Shark skeletons are made of cartilage. Fish skeletons are made of bones. Cartilage is the bendy, tough substance in people's ears and noses. Like other fish, sharks have gills that help them breathe. Unlike fish, people use lungs to get oxygen from the air. Fish get oxygen from the water using their gills. Water needs to move over the gills so the sharks can get enough oxygen. To keep the water moving, most sharks need to be swimming in water that has a very strong current.

Sharks have a lot of teeth. Sharks have many rows of teeth, rather than just one row like people. The teeth from the outside row gradually fall out. Then teeth from the next row take their place. Some sharks will lose 30,000 teeth in a lifetime! Each species of shark has different kinds of teeth and they eat various kinds of food. Some sharks eat food as small as plankton. Other sharks eat animals as big as sea turtles. Most sharks do not eat very often. Some sharks will go weeks between meals. Sharks are at the top of the ocean food chain. This position is very important. It keeps all of the other animal populations from growing out of control. This process helps ensure there is a diversity of life in the oceans.

1.) Which human organ is most similar to a shark's gills?

- a. Heart
- b. Lungs
- c. Brain
- d. Kidneys

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2.) The word *unique* means

- a. Unclear
- b. Ordinary
- c. Old
- d. Uncommon

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