

Name: _____

Great White Sharks

By Erin Ryan



The great white shark is one of the most recognizable sharks in the world. The only shark larger than a great white is the whale shark. Great white sharks have been found in each of the world's oceans. Even though they have been spotted in waters as shallow as three feet (one meter) deep, these sharks spend most of their time in deep coastal waters.

The great white shark is related to the prehistoric Megalodon shark, which grew to over sixty-five feet (20 meters). The largest great white sharks found have been over twenty feet (six meters) long. Like the Megalodon, great whites have huge triangle shaped teeth that are serrated, like knives. The teeth of great white sharks are up to three inches (seven centimeters) long and as they break off or wear out, new teeth grow in to replace them.



One of the most noticeable features of the great white is the dorsal fin which rises out of the water when a great white swims near the surface of the ocean. The fins on either side of the shark are called pectoral fins and they help to direct the shark closer to the surface or deeper into sea. The shark's tail is powered by very strong muscles. The

shark sweeps the tail side to side and can reach speeds of up to fifteen miles per hour (twenty-four kilometers per hour) and can have sudden powerful bursts of speed up to twenty-five miles per hour (forty kilometers per hour).

The great white shark has special receptors in its snout, or nose, that help it feel electrical pulses from prey. They also have sensors in their skin that help them to feel vibrations in the water. The main diet of this carnivore consists of large fish, squid, seals, sea lions, dolphins, and turtles. When a great white shark is feeding, it can roll back its eyes to protect them.



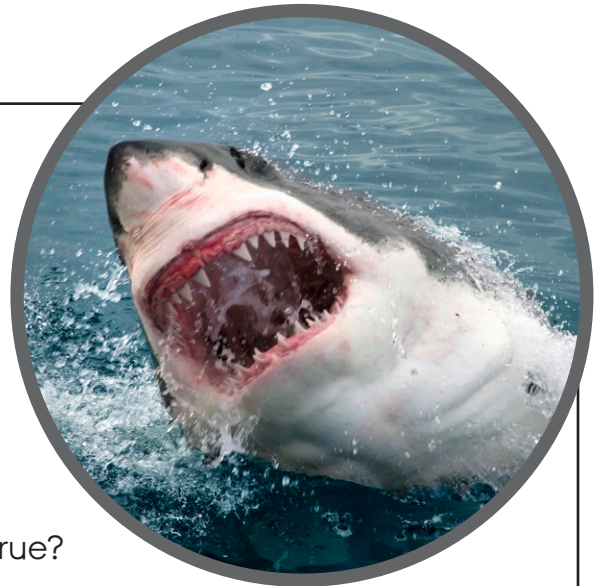
Because great white sharks are so dangerous, little is known about them in the wild. Great white sharks have never been kept in captivity for longer than seven months, so scientists are unsure how long they live. It is believed that their life span is almost thirty years.

The great white shark might be the most feared predator of the ocean, by people and by sea creatures alike!

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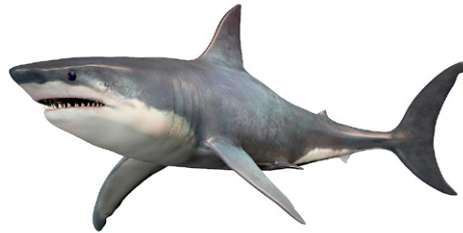
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1. Which fact about a great white shark's size is **not** true?
 - a. Whale sharks grow bigger than great white sharks.
 - b. Great white sharks grow as large as Megalodon sharks.
 - c. Megalodon sharks grew much bigger than great white sharks.
 - d. Great white sharks are not the largest sharks in the world today.

2. On the picture to the right, label the shark's **dorsal fin**, **pectoral fins**, and **tail**.



3. Explain how a great white's snout and skin help it find prey.

4. First, find the vocabulary words below in the article and highlight them. Then, match the vocabulary words on the left to the correct definitions on the right.

_____ carnivore
_____ vibrations
_____ serrated
_____ captivity
_____ receptors

a. sensors for feeling things
b. a confined place out of the wild
c. notched and jagged like a saw
d. animal that eats other animals
e. slight movements

ANSWER KEY

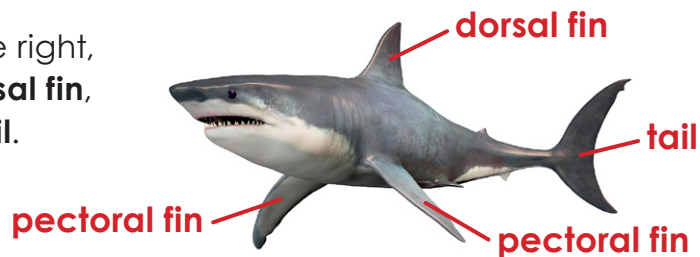
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3. Explain how a great white's snout and skin help it find prey.

Its snout has receptors that help it feel electrical pulses from prey. Its skin has sensors to help it feel vibrations in the water.

4. First, find the vocabulary words below in the article and highlight them. Then, match the vocabulary words on the left to the correct definitions on the right.

d. carnivore
e. vibrations
c. serrated
b. captivity
a. receptors

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