

Bone Detective - Student Activity – Stage 3



Aim

To work in small groups to investigate the identity of an animal using a jawbone as evidence.

Method

1. Listen to a short presentation by a Museum Education Officer.
2. Make notes in the table below about the jawbone your group is given.

Size of animal small, medium (cat-sized) large	Shelf on lower jaw present (a marsupial) absent (a placental)	Types of teeth look for evidence of incisors, canines and molars	Shape of molars wide with large surface area (plant eater) thin and pointed (meat eater)	Age of animal worn and smooth teeth (old) new and sharp teeth (young)	Strength of jaw heavy, thick jaw bone light, slender jaw bone	What does it eat? herbivore, carnivore or omnivore

Analyse your information and suggest which animal you have. Our suggestion is _____.

Visit the Skeletons exhibition to compare your jawbone with those on display and draw a conclusion about your jawbone's identity. Present your findings to the group in a short oral presentation which justifies the conclusion you have reached.

Conclusion:

Discussion:

Through looking at your animal's jawbone and teeth you have inferred information about the animal's age, size and diet. Name one other piece of information you could infer by examining the teeth / jawbone of an animal.

What other information apart from the teeth and jawbone would help you determine the animals diet. List three;

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____