

Name: _____

Sharks Are Awesome!

By Lydia Lukidis

Sharks have been around for a long, long time. How long? Well, they were around even before the dinosaurs!

There are about 400 kinds of sharks that live all around the world. Some are as small as 6 inches. Some are as long as 55 feet. That would be about 14 times taller than you!



There are many different types of sharks. You may have heard of the great white shark, hammerhead shark, bull shark, tiger shark and mako. Each one of them is unique in its own way. But one thing all sharks have in common is that they do not have a single bone in their bodies! Their skeleton is made up of cartilage instead. Cartilage is tough but flexible tissue. To give you an idea, we have cartilage in our ears and noses. Sharks have teeth though. In fact a shark always has a row of smaller teeth growing behind its front teeth. As time goes on, the smaller teeth move forward and the front teeth fall out.

If you saw a shark in the ocean, would you be scared? You probably would be! That's because sharks have a bad reputation. They are called predators. This means many of them hunt and eat other animals. People assume that all sharks are dangerous, however most species are harmless. There are only about 65 shark attacks in the whole world each year. Being killed by a shark is very unlikely. You are more likely to get hit by lightning!

In fact, many people say that humans are the real predators. People kill thousands of sharks each year for sport and for food. Sometimes shark skins are used like leather to make products.

In some countries, people eat shark fin soup and shark steak. The saddest part is that many sharks are killed just for their fins. This is called shark finning. Because of these issues, some sharks are endangered. That means there are very few left.



This is not a good thing. Sharks play an important role in the food chain. They are also an important part of ocean life. Without them, the delicate balance of the ocean's ecosystem could be broken.

So the next time you see a shark, be cautious and keep your distance, but remember that sharks are amazing animals and they deserve to be treated with respect!

About the Author



Lydia Lukidis is a published children's author with a multi-disciplinary background that spans the fields of literature, theater and puppetry.

Lydia's picture book, *Gerbs in the House: The Dilly Dally Bedtime Routine*, is now available. Find out if Mocha will ever get his silly son to sleep!

Lukidis, Lydia. *Gerbs in the House: The Dilly Dally Bedtime Routine* ISBN: 978-0-9917402-7-7

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1. List five species of sharks that were mentioned in the article.



2. Instead of bones, all sharks have a skeleton made up of cartilage. Which choice below is the correct definition of cartilage?

- a. rubbery and stretchy muscles
- b. really thick skin
- c. delicate organs
- d. tough but flexible tissue

3. According to the article, about how many shark attacks happen each year? (Use a complete sentence.)

4. The article lists several examples of why people kill sharks. Circle the choice that is **not** mentioned in the article.

- a. Some people use shark skins like leather to make products.
- b. Some people hang sharks on their wall as a decoration.
- c. Some people make shark fin soup to eat.
- d. Some people make shark steak to eat.

5. What does it mean to say that sharks are **endangered**? (Use a complete sentence.)

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

_____ 1. respect

a. a bright flash of light in the sky

_____ 2. ecosystem

b. a framework of bones that supports certain kinds of living things

_____ 3. leather

c. a high opinion; a favorable viewpoint

_____ 4. lightning

d. to suppose

_____ 5. assume

e. a type of material made from animal skin

_____ 6. predators

f. what most people think about someone or something

_____ 7. reputation

g. able to bend very easily without breaking

_____ 8. flexible

h. being one of a kind; set apart

_____ 9. skeleton

i. all the living things in an area and their interactions with each other and their nonliving environment

_____ 10. unique

j. animals that eat other animals to live

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In the article, "Sharks Are Awesome", you learned many interesting facts about sharks around the world.

Even though many people think sharks are very dangerous to humans, you learned that humans are also dangerous to sharks. Using the space below, describe three ways humans are dangerous to sharks. Then brainstorm three ideas that would help us protect sharks.

[illegible]

ANSWER KEY

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1. List five species of sharks that were mentioned in the article.

Five examples are the great white shark, hammerhead shark, bull shark, tiger shark, and mako.

2. Instead of bones, all sharks have a skeleton made up of cartilage. Which choice below is the correct definition of cartilage? **d.**

- a. rubbery and stretchy muscles
- b. really thick skin
- c. delicate organs
- d. tough but flexible tissue**

3. According to the article, about how many shark attacks happen each year? (Use a complete sentence.)

There are about 65 shark attacks in the world every year.

4. The article lists several examples of why people kill sharks. Circle the choice that is **not** mentioned in the article. **b.**

- a. Some people use shark skins like leather to make products.
- b. Some people hang sharks on their wall as a decoration.**
- c. Some people make shark fin soup to eat.
- d. Some people make shark steak to eat.

5. What does it mean to say that sharks are **endangered**? (Use a complete sentence.)

There are not many sharks left.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

c. 1. respect

i. 2. ecosystem

e. 3. leather

a. 4. lightning

d. 5. assume

j. 6. predators

f. 7. reputation

g. 8. flexible

b. 9. skeleton

h. 10. unique

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