



## Lesson

# 1 Total Tooth Truth

Keep Your Teeth Healthy and Your Smile Happy

# Why We Need Teeth

### OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, young learners use humorous tongue-twister exercises and interactive activities to investigate what teeth are made of and how healthy teeth lead to healthy bodies.

### TIMING:

35 to 40 minutes

### OBJECTIVES:

Students will investigate the purpose of teeth and identify tooth elements.

### SUPPLIES:

- Activity sheets (2).
- Model of teeth or image of a set of teeth to display.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

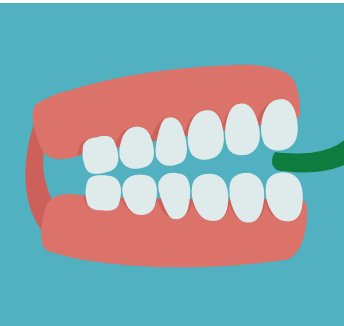
Why do we have teeth?  
What are teeth made of?

## Instructional Steps

### EXPLORE: TOOTHY TONGUE TWISTER (5 to 10 minutes)

1. Open the lesson by having students repeat out loud a tongue twister such as “She Sells Sea Shells” (<http://tinyurl.com/pqybn5f>) or “Peter Piper.” (<http://tinyurl.com/ozr68nw>) Once they have tried the tongue twister, challenge students to repeat the same tongue twister but this time without touching their tongues to their teeth.
2. After students have fun being silly in trying to speak without touching their tongues to their teeth, ask the class why it was so much harder the second time compared to the first. Encourage students to think about the different parts of our mouths—teeth, tongue, lips—and how they all work together to shape words. Explain that our teeth have many different functions, one of the most important being that they help us communicate by talking.
3. Next, ask students to share their ideas on other reasons for why we have teeth. Using student responses, emphasize that we use our teeth to:
  - A. Eat:** Teeth help us chew our food into small enough pieces to be swallowed.
  - B. Smile:** Teeth help us smile so we can display happiness.
  - C. Talk:** Teeth help us form words so that we can talk, just like in the tongue-twister challenge.





### INVESTIGATE: CANINE CRUNCHERS (15 minutes)

1. Introduce students to the different types of teeth we have, including molars, canines and incisors. Projecting an image of a set of teeth or using a large model, point to each of the molars, canines and incisors.
2. Tell students that we have different teeth to help us with different purposes. Ask students if they know what function each tooth performs. Explain that incisors help us to bite into foods since they are in the front of our mouths, canines help us to tear food, and molars help to crunch food fully so that we can swallow smaller pieces. Explain that working together, the incisor, canine and molar teeth ensure that we can chew our food safely.
3. Distribute the “Molar Madness” activity sheet and give students 5 minutes to complete the matching game individually or collaboratively in small groups. Have students share their answers and make sure they understand which teeth are incisors, canines and molars.



### PRACTICE: WHAT IS A TOOTH? (10 minutes)

1. Ask students what happens when we lose a tooth. Is it gone forever? Engage students in a brief discussion about the life cycle of teeth. Explain that we lose our baby teeth, but we also gain adult teeth.
2. Next, ask students what they think our teeth are made up of and explain that there are different elements that help make up a tooth (enamel, dentin, cementum, pulp, gums, root, crown). Using the “What’s Under the Surface” activity sheet, help students label each part of the tooth.
  - A. Enamel:** protective outer layer of a tooth.
  - B. Dentin:** the layer beneath the enamel that gives teeth color.
  - C. Cementum:** the protective layer that covers the root inside a tooth.
  - D. Pulp:** the center of a tooth, filled with nerves and blood vessels.
  - E. Gums:** tissue surrounding teeth to help keep them in place.
  - F. Root:** the part of a tooth that connects to the jaw bone.
  - G. Crown:** the visible part of teeth above the gum line.
3. As students are labeling the tooth, offer a brief explanation of the purpose for each part of a tooth:
  4. Close the lesson by engaging students in a brief discussion about why teeth have so many parts. Ask students: What would happen if our teeth didn’t have enamel? (Teeth would be very sensitive and unprotected.) What if our teeth didn’t have gums or roots? (It would be difficult to keep our teeth in place!)

**REFLECTION:** (5 minutes)

Ask students to write or discuss a brief response to the questions:

What is the purpose of your teeth?

Why do you need your teeth?

What is a tooth made up of?

### Extension Activities:



Extend the learning experience for students or create homework and project assignments by modifying the additional activities below:

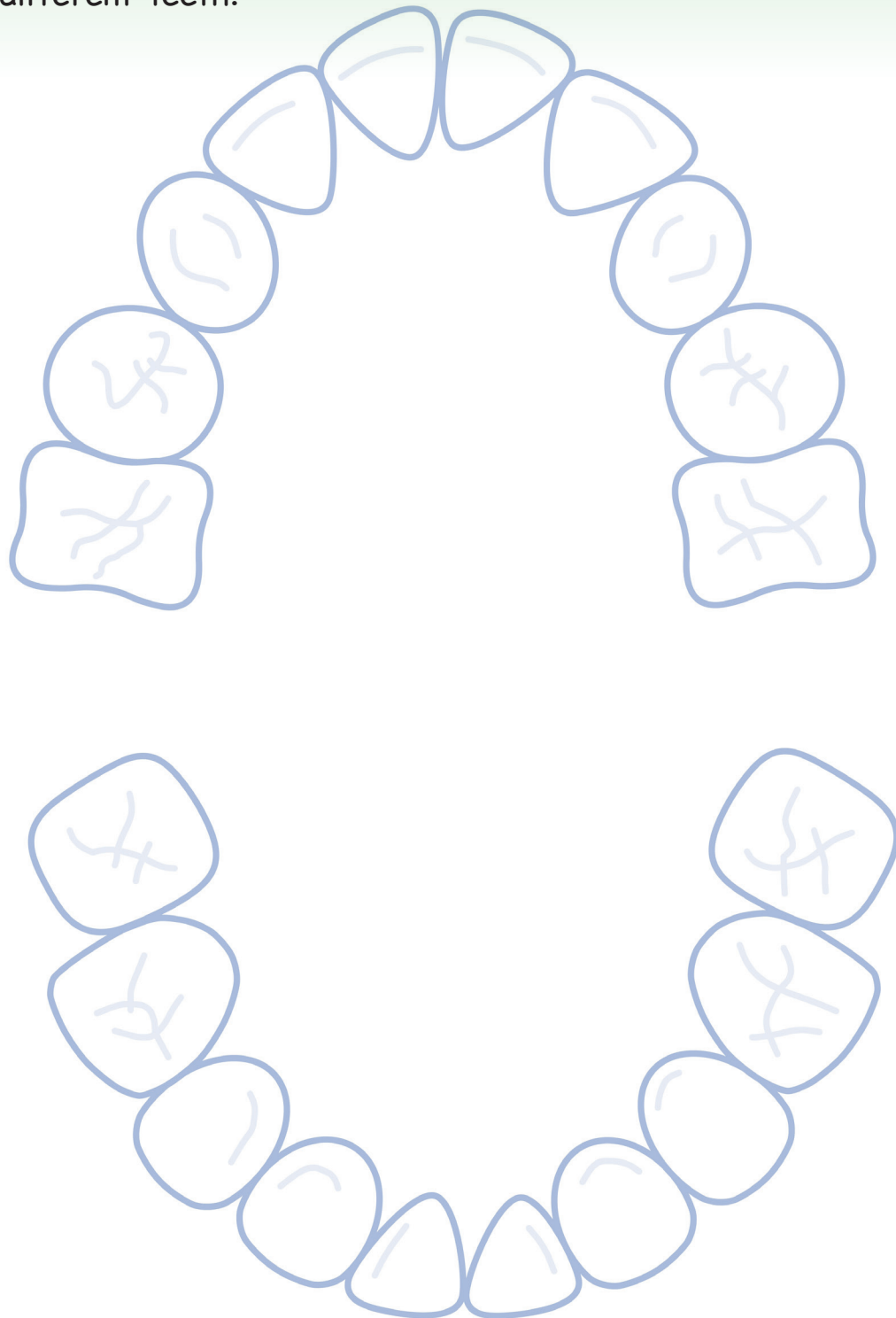
- Share different images of teeth, including human and animal teeth, such as dog, whale and shark teeth. Ask students to guess which teeth belong to a person and which belong to an animal. Challenge students to compare and contrast how animals use their teeth versus how people use teeth. What similarities do we share with animal teeth? What differences?
- Have students look at their own teeth in the mirror and draw or describe what they see. Encourage students to label each tooth and the parts of the mouth.
- Challenge students to count the number of teeth they have, or take a classroom poll of how many students have adult teeth, and then create a bar graph depicting the results.
- Have students write a story or illustrate a comic showing a character going through the life cycle of tooth development from losing baby teeth to gaining adult teeth.

# Molar Madness

**Instructions:**

Write the correct number in each tooth below to correctly label the different teeth.

- 1. Molar
- 2. Canine
- 3. Incisor



# What's Under the Surface?

## Instructions:

Write the correct name of each tooth part in the picture below.

## Word Bank:

Enamel    Cementum  
Dentin    Crown  
Gum        Root  
Pulp

