



Snacking Like a Shark Story Book Science at Home Activity

What you need

Basking Shark Model

- Bowl of water
- Spoonful of pepper or glitter
- Strainer or plastic comb

Port Jackson Shark Model

- Piece of paper

Cookiecutter Shark Model

- Playdoh, clay, or other material with similar texture
- Circle cookie cutter or cup

Preparation

Follow the instructions to build models for eating habits of three different sharks.

Basking Shark Model



Step 1. Collect materials. Fill the bowl with water and add a spoonful of glitter to the bowl. The glitter represents plankton.

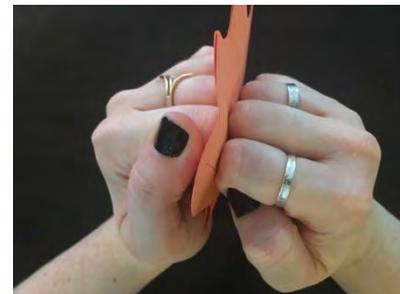


Step 2. Try and collect glitter while moving the comb or strainer, representing gill rakers, through the water.

Port Jackson Shark Model



Step 1. Collect a piece of paper. It represents hard-shelled prey. Make it into the shape of a hard-shelled prey!



Step 2. Use your knuckles to represent the flattened teeth of the Port Jackson shark and crush the paper!

Cookiecutter Shark Model



Step 1. Collect materials. Flatten play-doh or clay to represent flesh of prey.



Step 2. Take cookie cutter or cup, and place it in the play-doh. Twist to remove the utensil and the play-doh!

What to do

Use the models to demonstrate the various ways that different sharks eat their food.

What is happening?

There are a lot of fishes in the sea! They can be separated into categories based on their features or characteristics. For example, cartilaginous fishes, including sharks, skates, and rays, have a skeleton made of cartilage, not bone, which includes their jaws! Sharks have jaws with rows and rows of teeth, but different sharks have different shapes of teeth to eat their food.

Basking sharks are filter feeders. They do not use their hundreds of tiny teeth to eat zooplankton, or small animals that move with the ocean. Basking sharks swim with their mouths open and take in large amounts of water, then push the water out of their body from their gill slits. The zooplankton get stuck in their gill rakers! Port Jackson sharks have flattened teeth used to crush prey with shells and other hard bits. Cookiecutter sharks have a row of very sharp, connected triangular teeth. Cookiecutter sharks, after attracting the attention of their prey, bite them! The cookiecutter sharks attack by first suctioning themselves to their prey using their lips and teeth, and then spinning to detach themselves along with a circular piece of their prey.

Information on sharks from *Discover Fishes* by the Florida Museum.

Basking Shark



Image credit: Greg B. Skomal, from <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/tagging-reveals-secrets-southern-californias-largest-sharks>

Port Jackson Shark



Image credit: Wikimedia Commons

Cookiecutter Shark



Image credit: Jennifer Strotman, from <https://ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/sharks-rays/cookie-monster-sea>