



Transcript for *Walk on the Wild Side* (Kids Can Press) Preview Video

Preview (0:00 – 6:08)

Hi everyone! It's Colleen from the KU Natural History Museum, and I am here to remind you about tomorrow's Story Book Science on Facebook Live at 10 o'clock AM. We are going to be reading a book called *Walk on the Wild Side*. It's by Nicholas Oldland, and we will be reading it with permission from Kids Can Press.

Now you might recognize the animals on the cover from last week's book. We have the beaver, the bear, and the moose. Last week they went on an adventure canoeing up a creek. This week they are going on an adventure racing up a mountain; and so we will be reading about that adventure and all of the fun that entails.

Now when I look at the cover of the book, and I see those animals, and when I look at pictures of those animals like the ones that I have on my wall, I think about the things that they have in common. So their shared characters; and the reason that a beaver, a moose, and a bear have shared characters is because they are mammals. And the shared characters are features that all mammals have and only mammals have. So the shared character that I think of is the hair or the fur that mammals have. Now mammals have these shared characters, but they also have adaptations. Adaptations are features that have changed over time that allow a living thing to survive its environment. So with mammals there are many adaptations we could talk about, but we're going to talk about adaptations related to diet reflected in the different types of teeth that mammals have, specifically the beaver, moose, and bear.

So the diets that mammals can have, those are written on the wall. The first is carnivore. What that means is that the mammal eats only meat. You can also have an herbivore diet, which means that the mammal only eats plants; and you can even have an omnivore diet, which means that the mammal eats both meat and plants.

Now I wanted to just share with you one specimen that I'll show tomorrow, and that is the skull of a beaver. We're going to use that skull in order to better understand what the teeth look like and how that is related to its diet. So I have here some pieces: um, this is the top part of a beaver skull, and then this is – making sure it's turned so you can see it – this is the lower jaw. Now these pieces, they come from two different beavers. I know that because the lower jaw is much bigger than the upper skull; but we're going to imagine that these two parts came from the same animal, and just so I can show you how they would connect. So this is what – making sure you can see it – this is what it would look like if you had the top skull and the lower jaw connected. Now I'm going to put the lower jaw down, and we're going to focus on just this upper skull portion. So the first thing that you probably notice with a beaver are its incisors that you see at the front of its face. They are long, and they're orange; and they're very important, but we're not going to focus on those just yet. We're going to focus on the cheek teeth, which you would find along the cheek – and I'll put that closer to the camera so you can see. So these cheek teeth are the premolars and molars of the beaver; and what you probably noticed when you looked at them is that they're very wide, and they're bumpy; and this indicates the diet of a beaver is plants. So it's an herbivore. The wide and bumpy teeth are really good at grinding up plant material and crushing it up so that the beaver can then digest it and eat it. So if you didn't know what the diet of a beaver was, you would be able to tell based on its – sheet – on the shape of its teeth.

Now the other thing that I want to go back to are those incisors. So again those are the teeth at the front of the beaver's skull. They are orange, and that is caused by the enamel. That makes those teeth really strong, and that's good because the beaver uses those incisors in order to gnaw on tree bark; and so the enamel keeps it strong so that they don't break, and it allows those teeth to, to self-sharpen so the beaver can continue to gnaw on tree bark; and those teeth can continue to grow.

So that was just a sneak preview of the specimens I'll show you. I'll have some other specimens tomorrow. I'm also going to have a little activity. It does not at all require you to have a piece of paper, but if you would like to have a piece of paper, you can have a scrap sheet like this. I'll be using a piece of tissue paper; but again, you don't need a piece of paper if you don't want one; and I'll also remind you tomorrow about the activity and grabbing a sheet of paper.

I hope you join me tomorrow; again, that will be here on Facebook Live at 10am where we will read *Walk on the Wild Side* by Nicholas Oldland. I'll see you then!