



Student Worksheet: What Makes a Shark a Shark?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Aim:

What characteristics make sharks unique from other fish, and how do these features help them survive in their marine environment?

Do Now:

Write down three things you know (or think you know) about sharks. What makes them different from other fish like tuna or goldfish?

1.

2.

3.

Shark Anatomy and Buoyancy

1. What type of skeleton do sharks have? How is it different from bony fish?

2. Why do sharks have negative buoyancy?

3. What adaptation helps sharks stay buoyant despite lacking a swim bladder?

4. Describe the function of the heterocercal tail:

Skin and Respiration

5. What are dermal denticles, and how do they benefit sharks?

6. How many gill slits do most sharks have? How does this differ from bony fish?

7. Why must many sharks keep swimming to breathe?



Reproduction and Teeth

8. What is internal fertilization, and what structures do male sharks use?

9. List the three main types of shark reproduction and give an example of each:

- Oviparous: _____

● Ovoviparous: _____

● Viviparous: _____

10. How are shark teeth different from those of bony fish?

11. What happens to shark teeth throughout their life?

Sensory Adaptations

12. What is the lateral line system and what does it detect?

13. What are the ampullae of Lorenzini and what do they detect?

14. Name two other highly developed senses sharks possess:

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Exit Ticket:

In 2–3 sentences, explain how two of the shark's unique features help it survive and thrive in marine environments.

