

Mammal Skulls and Teeth

Deer



What do we know about deer?



Where do I sleep?

Am I nocturnal?

What do I eat?

What might eat me?

What do we know about deer?

1. Am I nocturnal?

Yes - I am most active at night and at dawn and dusk

2. Where do I sleep?

On the ground, well hidden by thick bracken or bushes

3. What might eat me?

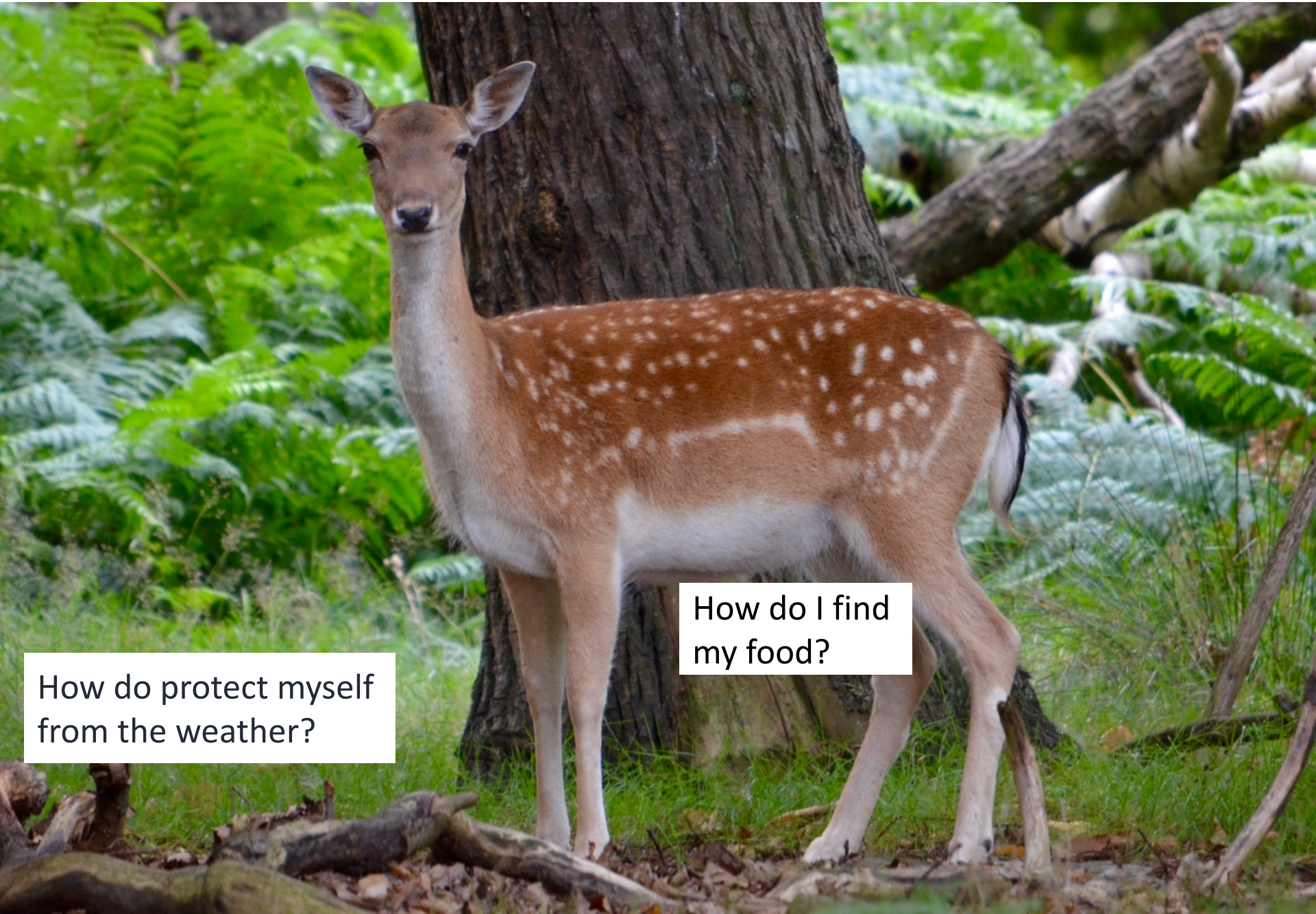
Eagles prey on deer and foxes may prey on weak or young deer

4. What do I eat?

Grass, acorns, beech nuts, chestnuts, leaves, twigs, bark and berries



What else can we learn by looking carefully at it?



How do protect myself
from the weather?

How do I find
my food?

What else can we learn by looking carefully at it?



1. How do I protect myself from the weather?

I have a thick coat in winter which keeps me warm.
I shelter in the woods or under cover, out of the rain.

2. How do I find my food?
There is plenty of food for me. It is easy to see.

How does the deer keep safe from being eaten by predators?

What do you notice about:

2. Its ears?

3. Its eyes?

1. Its fur?

4. Its whiskers?

5. Its legs and feet?



How does the deer keep safe from being eaten by predators?

What do you notice about:

1. Its fur?

Fallow deer (like this one) have thick, brown hair, with white spots and lines. The belly is white. There is a black line on the tail.

The spots and lines are good camouflage, as they break up the shape of the deer.

2. Its ears?

It has large, upright, pointed ears which stick out from the sides of the head.

3. Its eyes?

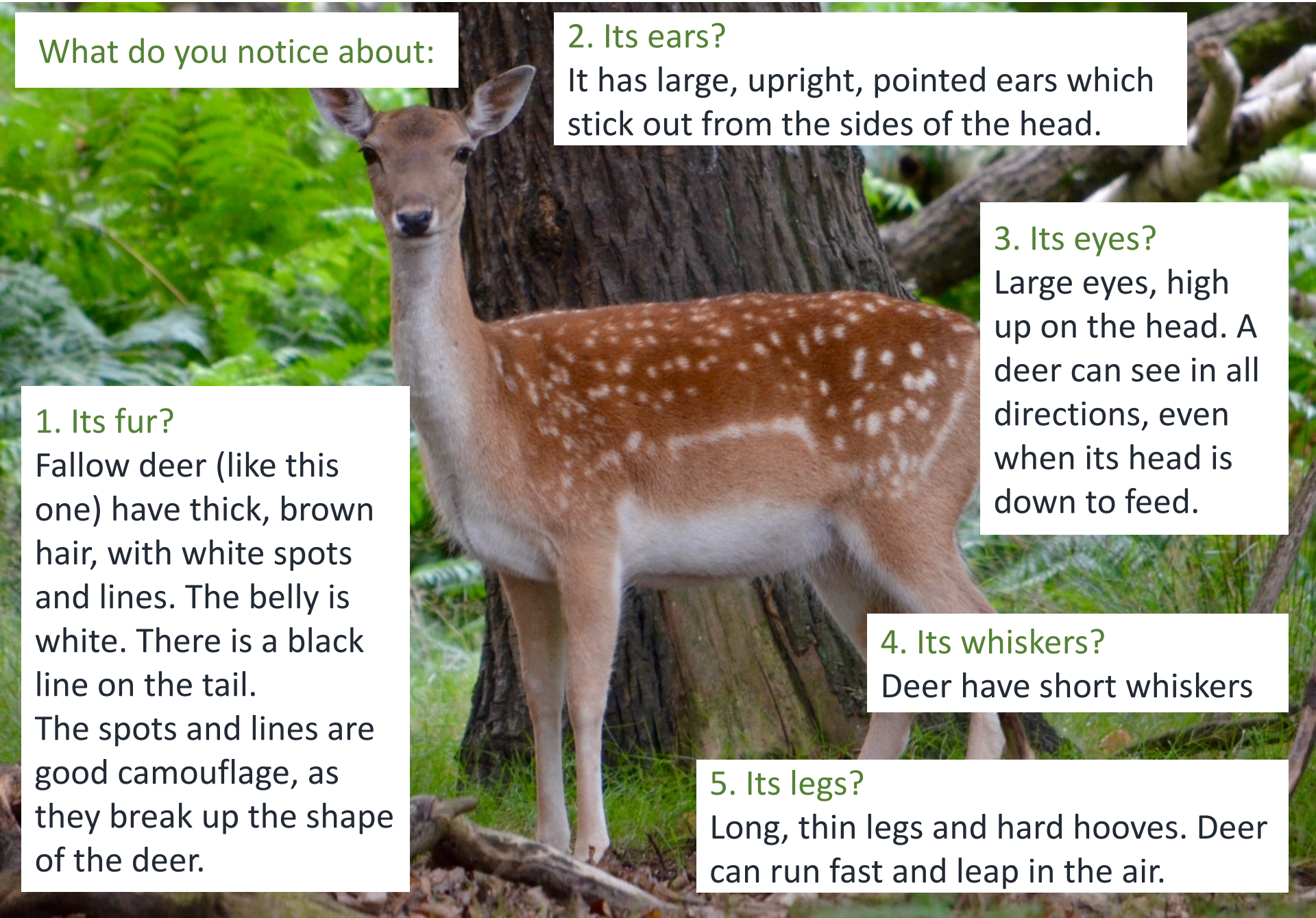
Large eyes, high up on the head. A deer can see in all directions, even when its head is down to feed.

4. Its whiskers?

Deer have short whiskers

5. Its legs?

Long, thin legs and hard hooves. Deer can run fast and leap in the air.



What have we learned? What do you notice about these deer?



Can we find out any more, when we look at a deer skull?

What kind of teeth do I have?

Where do my eyes go?



What is this gap for?

What is this bone called?

What is this hole?

Can we find out any more, when we look at a deer skull?

1. What kind of teeth do I have?

Incisors and canines, for tearing off grass and leaves. Only on the bottom. None on top.

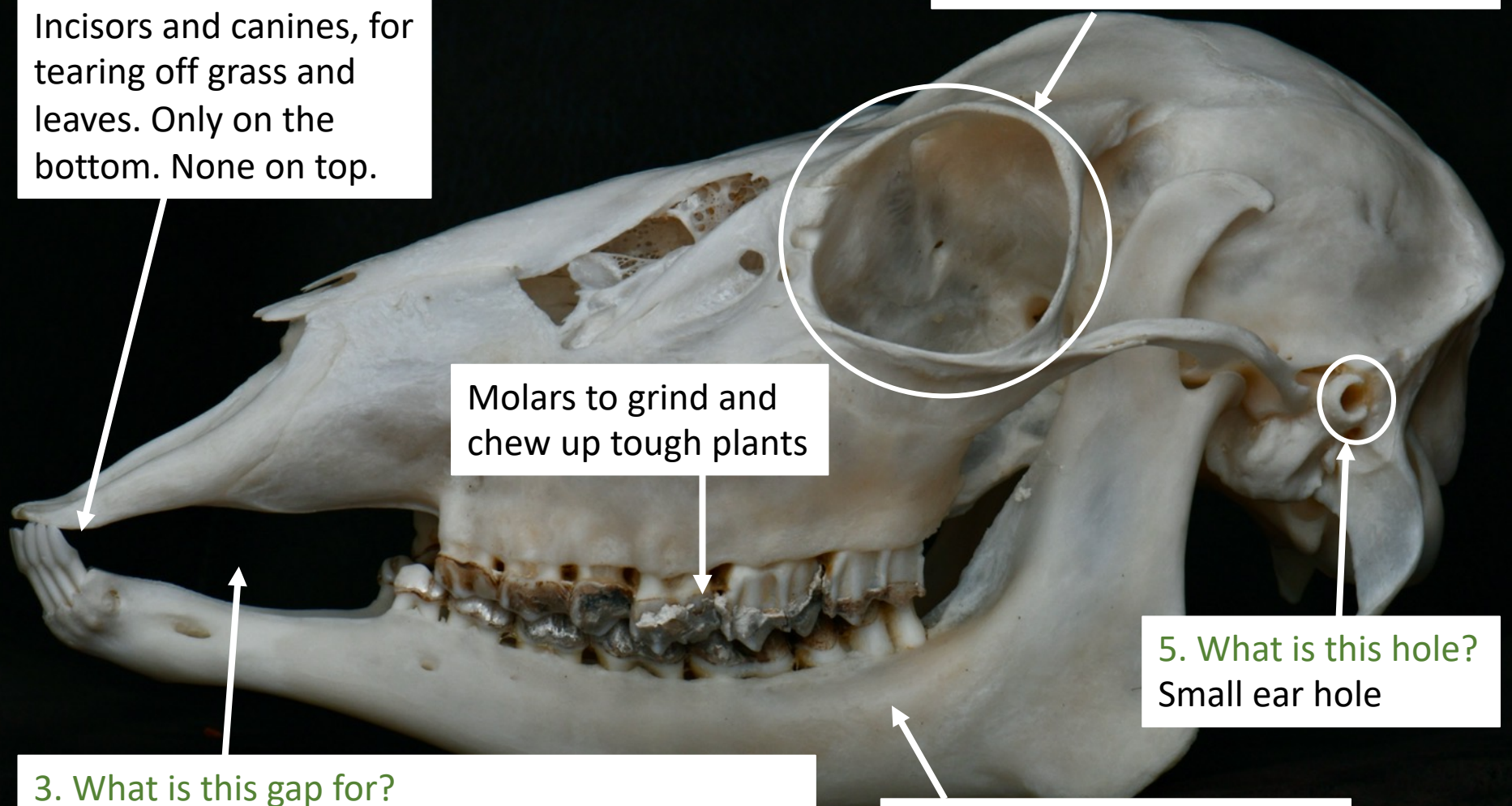
2. Where do my eyes go?
Huge eye socket, high on the skull

Molars to grind and chew up tough plants

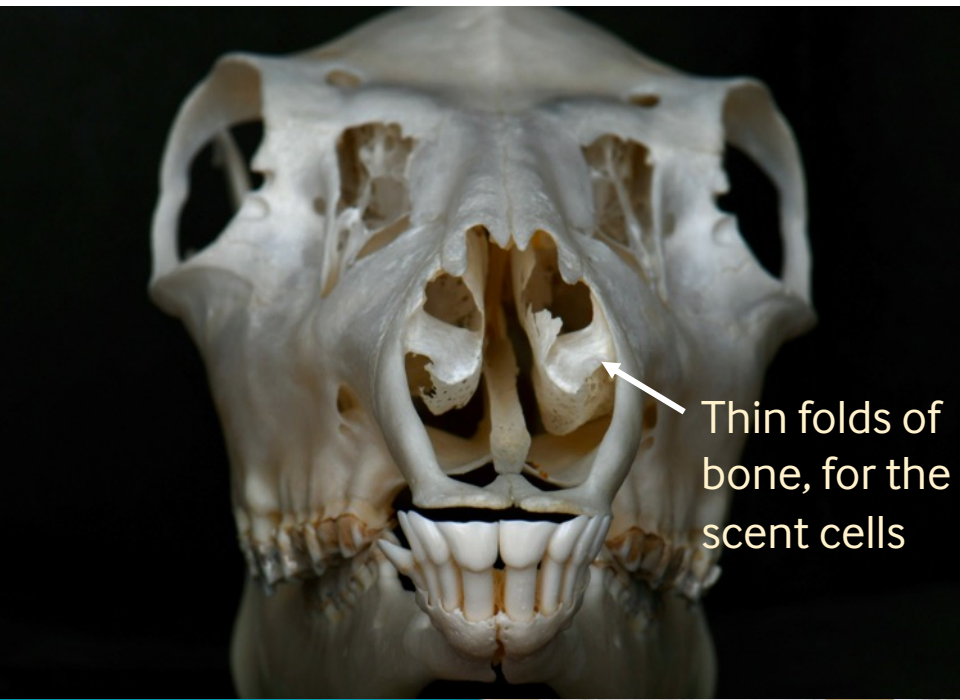
3. What is this gap for?
Deer suck their cheeks into this gap to block off the mouth when grazing, so they don't choke.

4. What is this bone called?
Jawbone

5. What is this hole?
Small ear hole



Deer skull - what else can you see in these pictures?



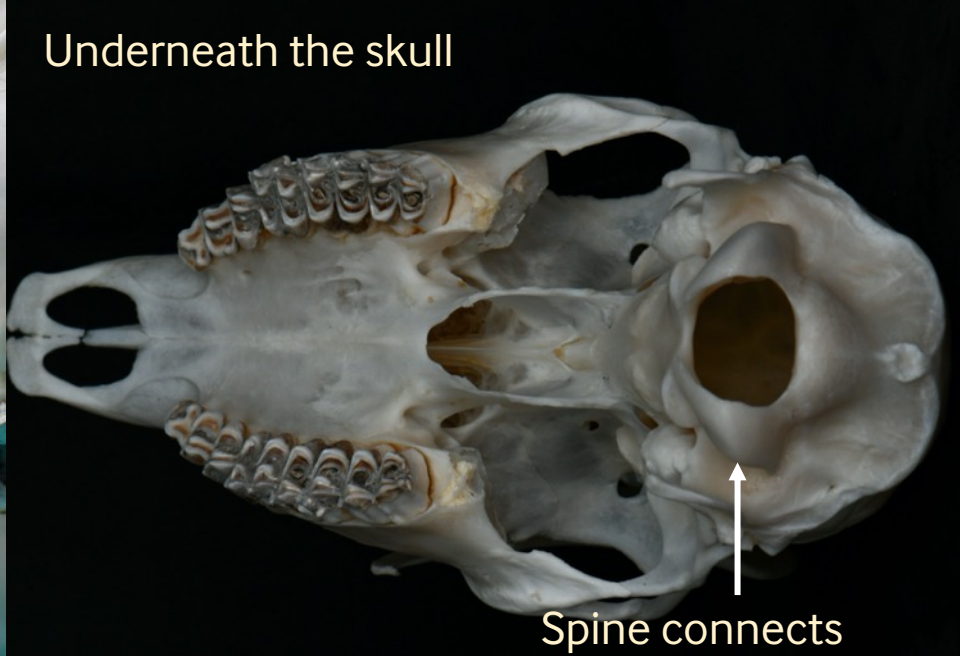
Thin folds of bone, for the scent cells



Skull and deep jawbone, from behind



No incisors on top.



Underneath the skull

Spine connects

Let's compare a deer skull with a squirrel skull. What is the same and what is different? What does this tell us about a squirrel?



Let's compare the sizes of different animal skulls

| Animal | Skull Length | Skull Height |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Hedgehog | 3.5cm | 0.8cm |
| Squirrel | 6cm | 2cm |
| Rabbit | 8.5cm | 3.5cm |
| Badger | 13cm | 6cm |
| Fox | 15cm | 6cm |
| Fallow Deer | 26cm | 13cm |



Badger

Rabbit



Squirrel



Fox



Deer



Hedgehog

Extra Background Information for Teachers

- Deer are **herbivores**. They eat grass, leaves, twigs, acorns, nuts, farmers' crops, blackberries and tree bark. They have incisors and canines in the bottom jaw and a hard pad in the top jaw. This helps them grab large clumps of leaves or grass, without snipping them off. They chew and grind up the food up with their molars, which have deep ridges. Like cows, deer '**ruminates**' or '**chew the cud**', bringing the food back up into their mouth from the stomach, to chew it a second time.
- For most of the year, female deer live in separate '**herds**', usually mothers with their young. The male deer stay with other males. They come together in the autumn, for the '**rut**'. This is when the males fight each other, using their **antlers**. Every spring, the antlers fall off and larger ones grow back. They have a soft velvet covering while they grow.
- **Habitat**. These photos are all of fallow deer. They live in woods and forests, with thick undergrowth such as brambles, nettles, bracken and other plants. Some live in fields or farmland, in deer parks and country estates.
- **Squirrels** are **omnivores**. Like deer, they eat tough acorns, chestnuts, twigs and tree bark. They also eat insects and birds' eggs and chicks. They have just two very large incisors in the top and bottom of the mouth and no canines. Like deer, they have a gap before the molars. Both have very large eyes to watch for danger. See the Squirrel PowerPoint, for more information.

Find Out More

[The Nature Collection](http://www.thenaturecollection.co.uk/photos.html) is an extraordinary collection of animal bones, skeletons, feathers, antlers, skins and photographs and was created by Susanna Ramsey. Click here to find out more about the skeletons of our local animals and for information on a range of British wildlife products created with the TTS schools resources catalogue <http://www.thenaturecollection.co.uk/photos.html>

The Mammal Society

<https://www.mammal.org.uk/species-hub/full-species-hub/discover-mammals/species-fallow-deer/>

The Wildlife Trusts

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/mammals/fallow-deer>

The British Wildlife Centre

<https://britishwildlifecentre.co.uk/planyourvisit/animals/fallow-deer/>

The British Deer Society

<https://www.bds.org.uk/information-advice/about-deer/deer-species/fallow-deer/>



This slideshow was created by the Primary Science Teaching Trust and The Nature Collection

