

Mammal Skulls and Teeth

Fox



What do we know about foxes?

Am I nocturnal?

What do I eat?

Where do I sleep?

What might eat me?



What do we know about foxes?



1. Am I nocturnal?

Yes, mainly at dawn or dusk. I may be active on autumn days.

2. What do I eat?

Mice, rats, rabbits, birds, frogs, beetles, earthworms, berries, dead animals and scraps

3. Where do I sleep?

Usually above ground, under a bush or in long grasses.

4. What might eat me?

Eagles prey on foxes and the cubs may be eaten by badgers.

What else can we learn by looking carefully at it?

How do I
protect myself?

How do I find my food?

How do I catch my food?



What else can we learn by looking carefully at it?

1. How do I protect myself?

My thick fur keeps me safe and warm.

I can shelter underground in heavy rain.

My sharp claws and teeth frighten other animals.

2. How do I find my food?

I use my ears, eyes, long nose and whiskers.

3. How do I catch my food?

I have a light body and long legs to chase after prey.

I leap and pounce onto my prey, killing it with my sharp claws.



How does the fox protect itself?

What do you notice about:

1. Its ears?

2. Its eyes?

3. Its tail?

6. Its nose and whiskers?

5. Its legs and feet?

1. Its fur?



How does the fox protect itself?

What do you notice about:

1. Its ears?

Large, upright, pointed ears.
to hear the squeaks and rustlings
made by its prey, at night.

2. Its eyes?

Small, close together
and facing forwards.
It sees objects in front
of it, using both eyes.

3. Its tail?

The long, bushy tail is for
balance. A fox uses its tail to
show if it is feeling
aggressive or friendly.

4. Its nose and whiskers?

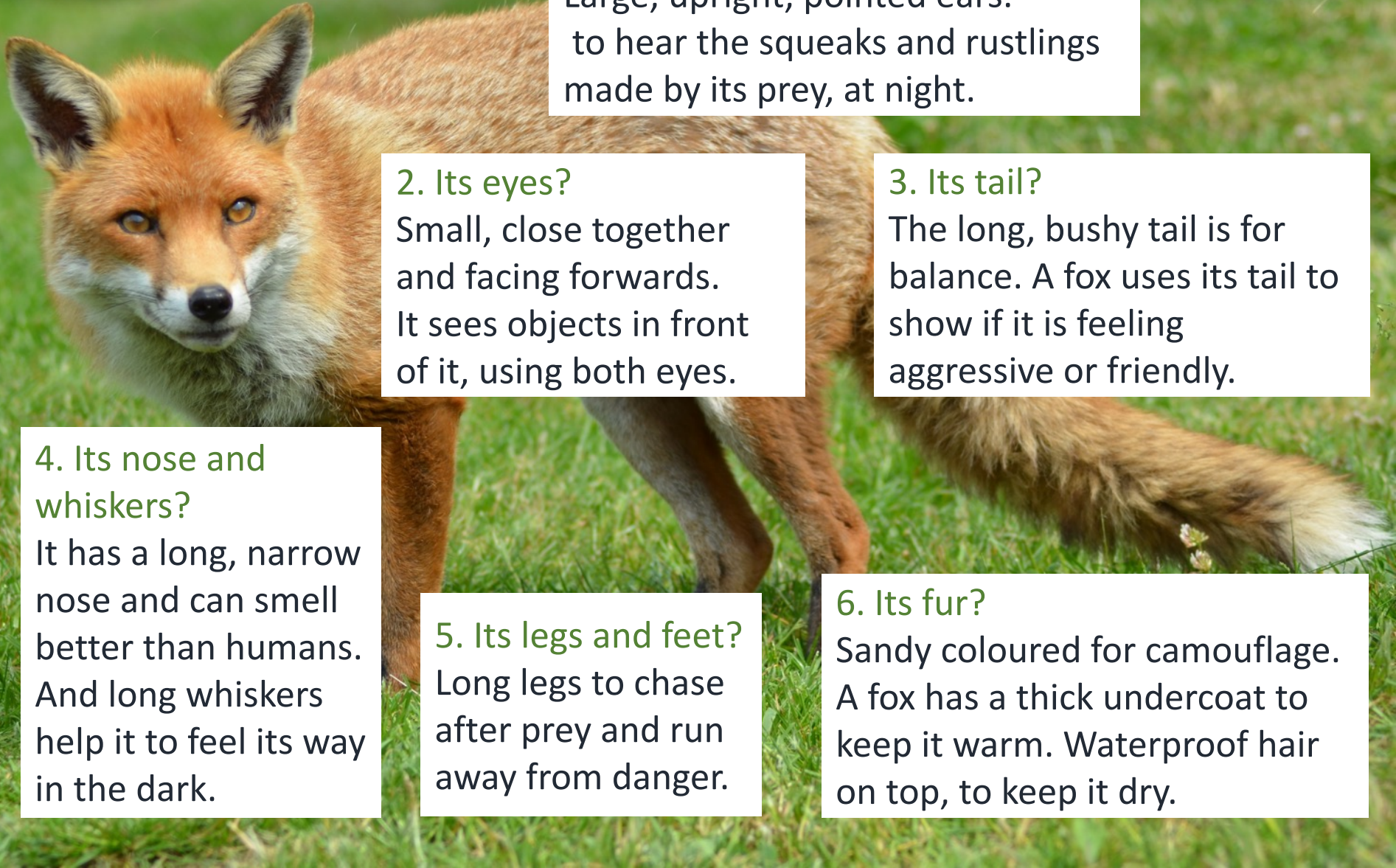
It has a long, narrow
nose and can smell
better than humans.
And long whiskers
help it to feel its way
in the dark.

5. Its legs and feet?

Long legs to chase
after prey and run
away from danger.

6. Its fur?

Sandy coloured for camouflage.
A fox has a thick undercoat to
keep it warm. Waterproof hair
on top, to keep it dry.



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



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

What kind of teeth do I have?

Where do my eyes go?

Where does my brain go?

What is this ridge?



What is this bone called?

What is this hole?

Can we find out anything else when we look at a fox skull?

1. What kind of teeth do I have?

Incisors to bite and tear up skin and flesh. Also, to grab insects and berries.

2. Where do my eyes go? Small eye socket, in line with the nose

Pointed teeth which slice like scissors ('carnassials') to cut through flesh and bone

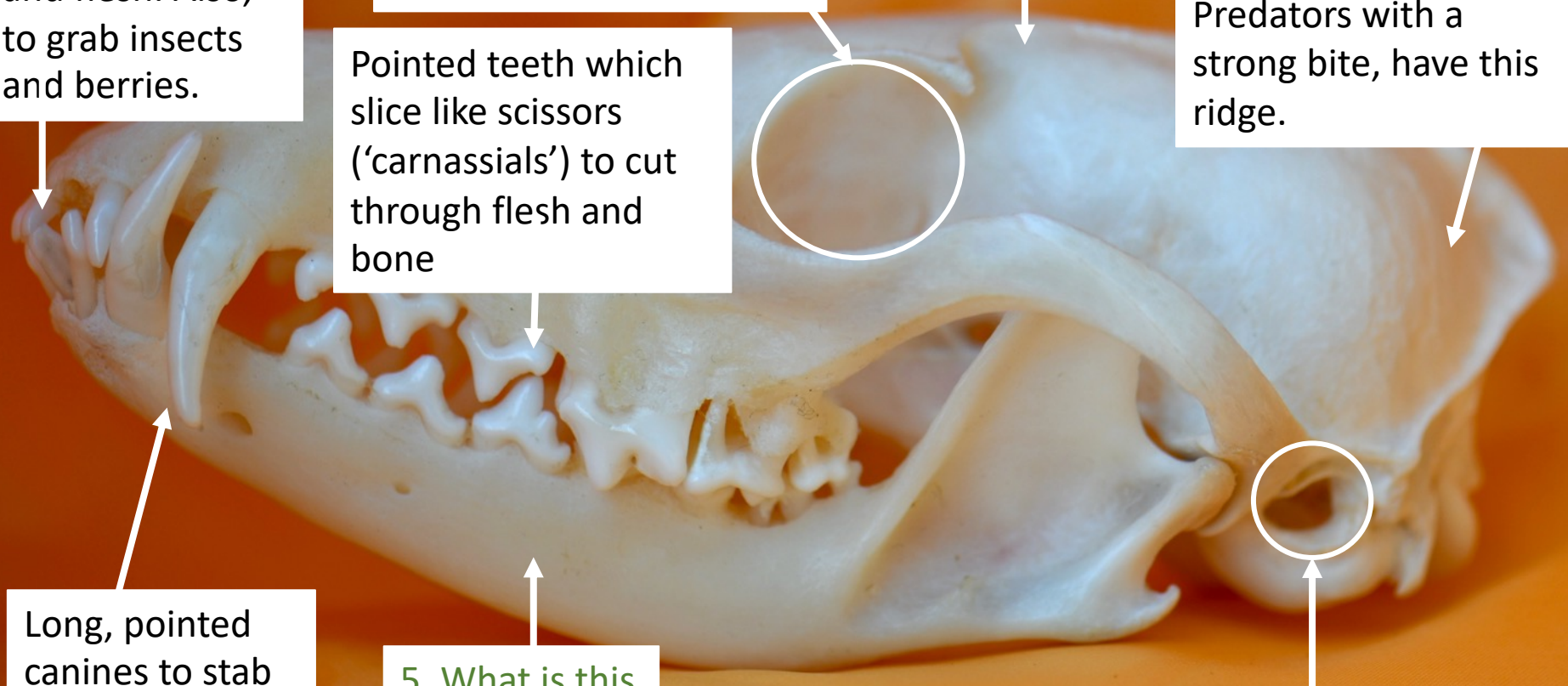
3. Where does my brain go? In here

4. What is this ridge? The jaw's chewing muscles attach here. Predators with a strong bite, have this ridge.

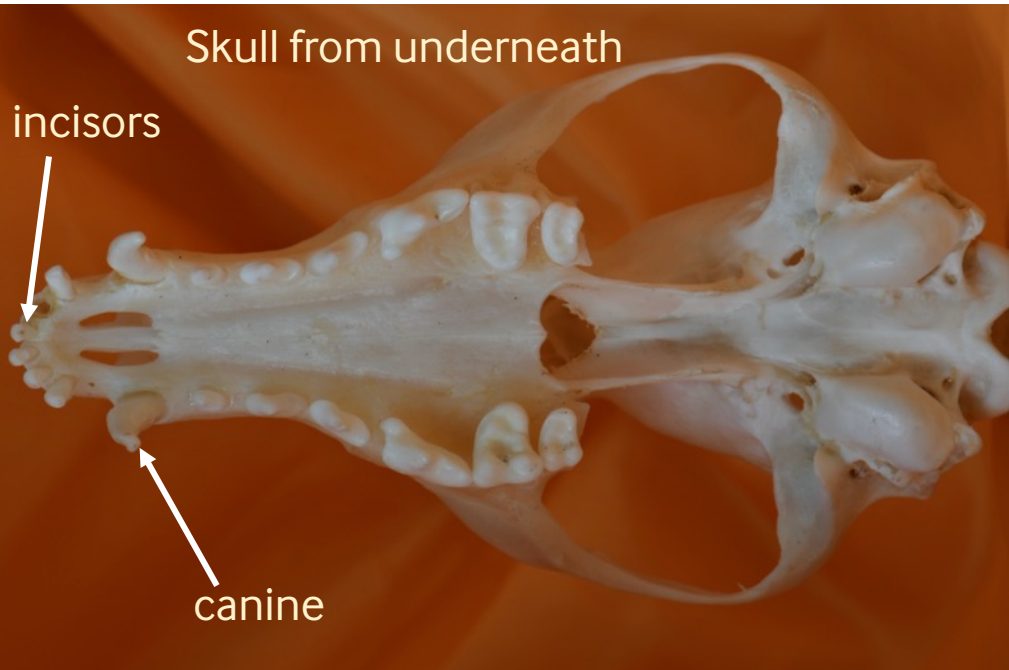
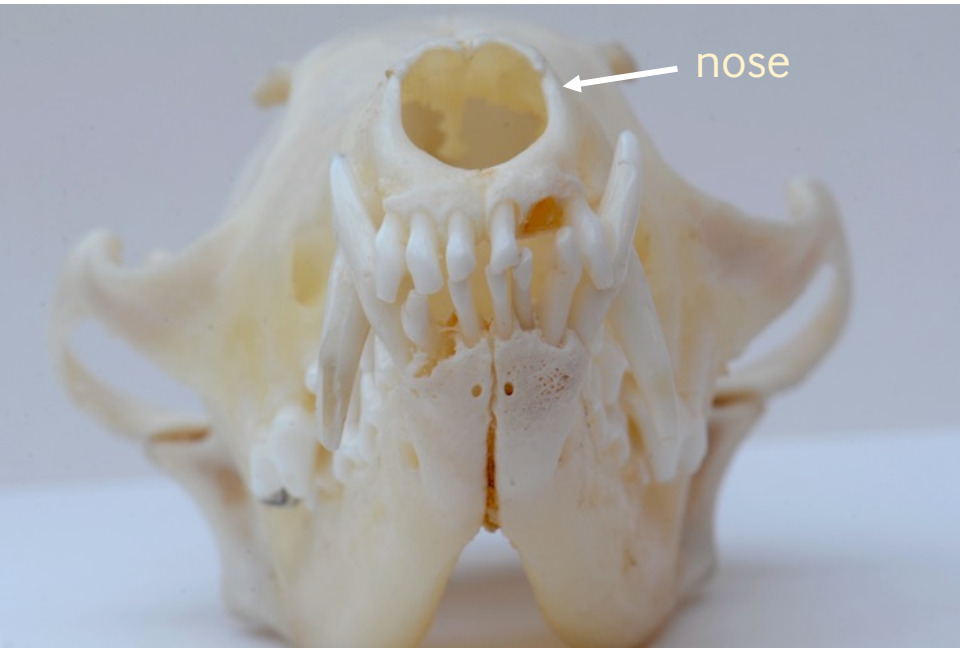
Long, pointed canines to stab and grip prey. Also, for display.

5. What is this bone called? Jawbone

6. What is this hole? Ear hole. Sounds caught by the ear go in here.



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



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



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



Hedgehog



Badger



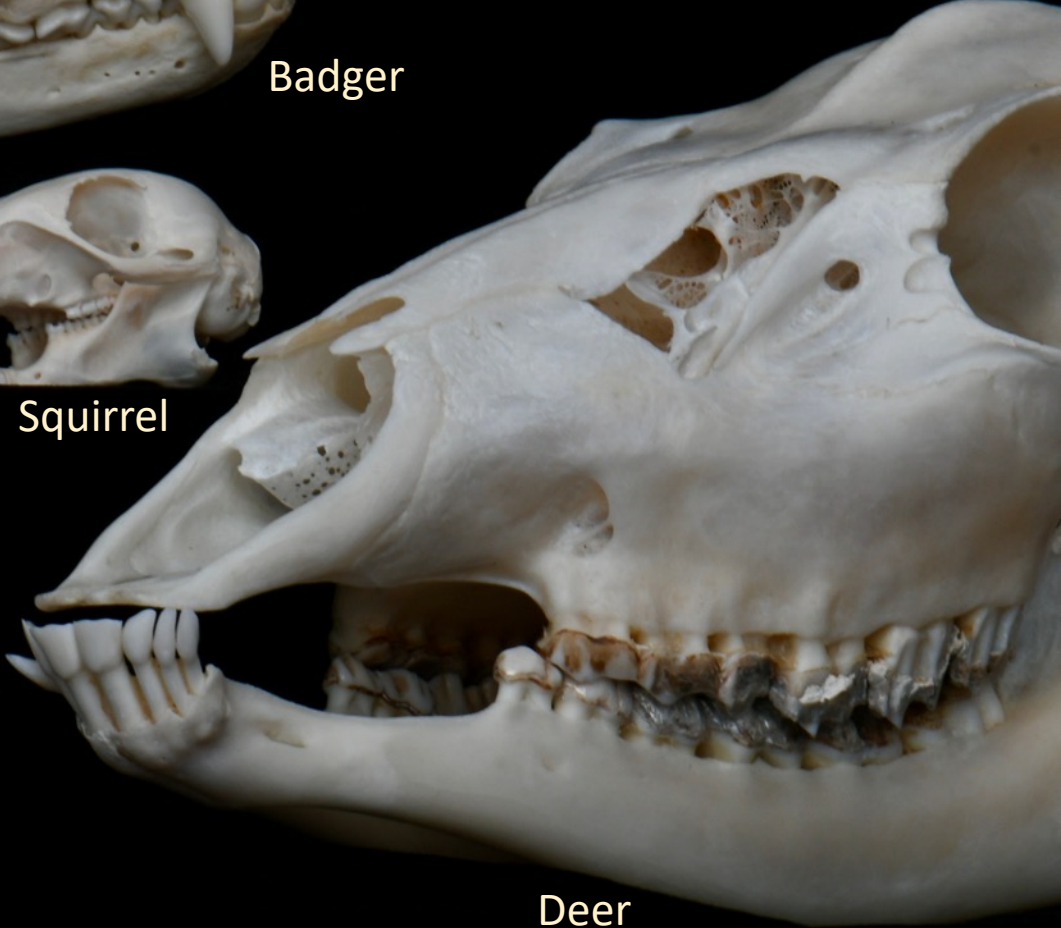
Rabbit



Squirrel



Fox



Deer

Extra Background Information for Teachers

- Foxes are **omnivores**. Their skull is solid. They have sharp, pointed teeth, mainly for killing and breaking up flesh and bone. They swallow their food in chunks. They do not chew and grind up food, like herbivores. The plant material which they eat is fruit and berries, which they swallow whole. (Not tough roots and grasses, which need to be chewed.) Foxes also pick up earthworms and beetles, which again they swallow whole. They scavenge for scraps in rubbish tips and dustbins.
- Foxes live alone or in small family groups. They sleep above ground under the cover of bushes or hedges. They dig out a shallow hole under tree roots or a garden shed, when they have their cubs or if the weather is wet. This hollow is called an '**earth**' or '**den**'.
- **Habitat**. Foxes live in many different habitats. They live in the countryside and in woods, on the coast and in towns and cities, in the parks and gardens.
- **Hedgehogs** are **insectivores**. They have rows of small teeth, which are sharp and pointed. Like foxes, hedgehogs are predators, with small eyes, facing forwards to seek out prey. They eat mainly earthworms, beetles, slugs, caterpillars and millipedes. See the Hedgehog 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-fox/>

The Wildlife Trusts

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/mammals/red-fox>

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/other-garden-wildlife/mammals/fox/>

The British Wildlife Centre

<https://britishwildlifecentre.co.uk/planyourvisit/animals/fox/>

The fox photos were all taken here, at The British Wildlife Centre in Surrey.



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

