

# Mammal Skulls and Teeth

# Rabbit



# What do we know about rabbits?

Am I nocturnal?

What do I eat?

Where do I sleep?

What might eat me?



# What do we know about rabbits?

1. Am I nocturnal?

Yes, but I might come out by day, in the summer

2. Where do I sleep?

In an underground burrow with my family

3. What might eat me?

Foxes, buzzards, stoats and weasels

4. What do I eat?

Grass, leaves, vegetables, farmers' crops, fruit, buds, twigs and bark



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?

5. How do protect myself from the weather?

My soft fur keeps me warm.

I shelter underground from the rain and cold.



6. How do I find my food?

I use my eyes, nose and tongue to find good food.

# How does the rabbit keep safe from being eaten by predators?

What do you notice about:

1. Its fur?

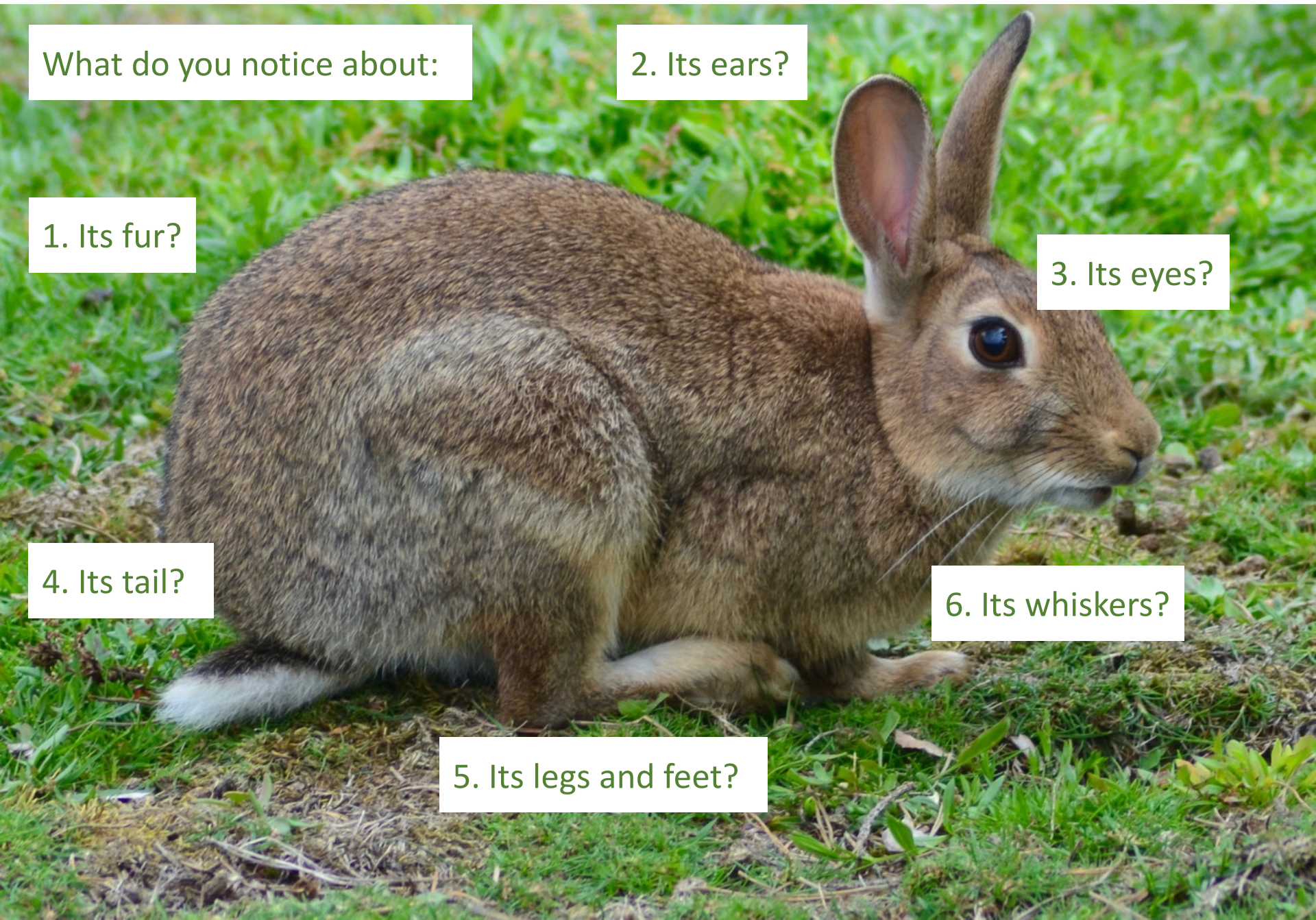
2. Its ears?

3. Its eyes?

4. Its tail?

6. Its whiskers?

5. Its legs and feet?



# How does the rabbit keep safe from being eaten by predators?

What do you notice about:

## 1. Its fur?

It is brown for good camouflage

## 4. Its tail?

Its white tail flashes when it runs, which warns other rabbits of danger

## 5. Its legs and feet?

It has long, powerful back legs and long back feet, to leap up and run away quickly

## 2. Its ears?

A rabbit has long ears which it can twist, to pick up sounds all around it

## 3. Its eyes?

The big eyes face sideways, so it can watch for danger in all directions

## 6. Its whiskers?

Its long whiskers sense movements in the air, so it knows what is coming. Whiskers help it to find the way in the dark.



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





# Can we find out any more, when we look at a rabbit's skull?

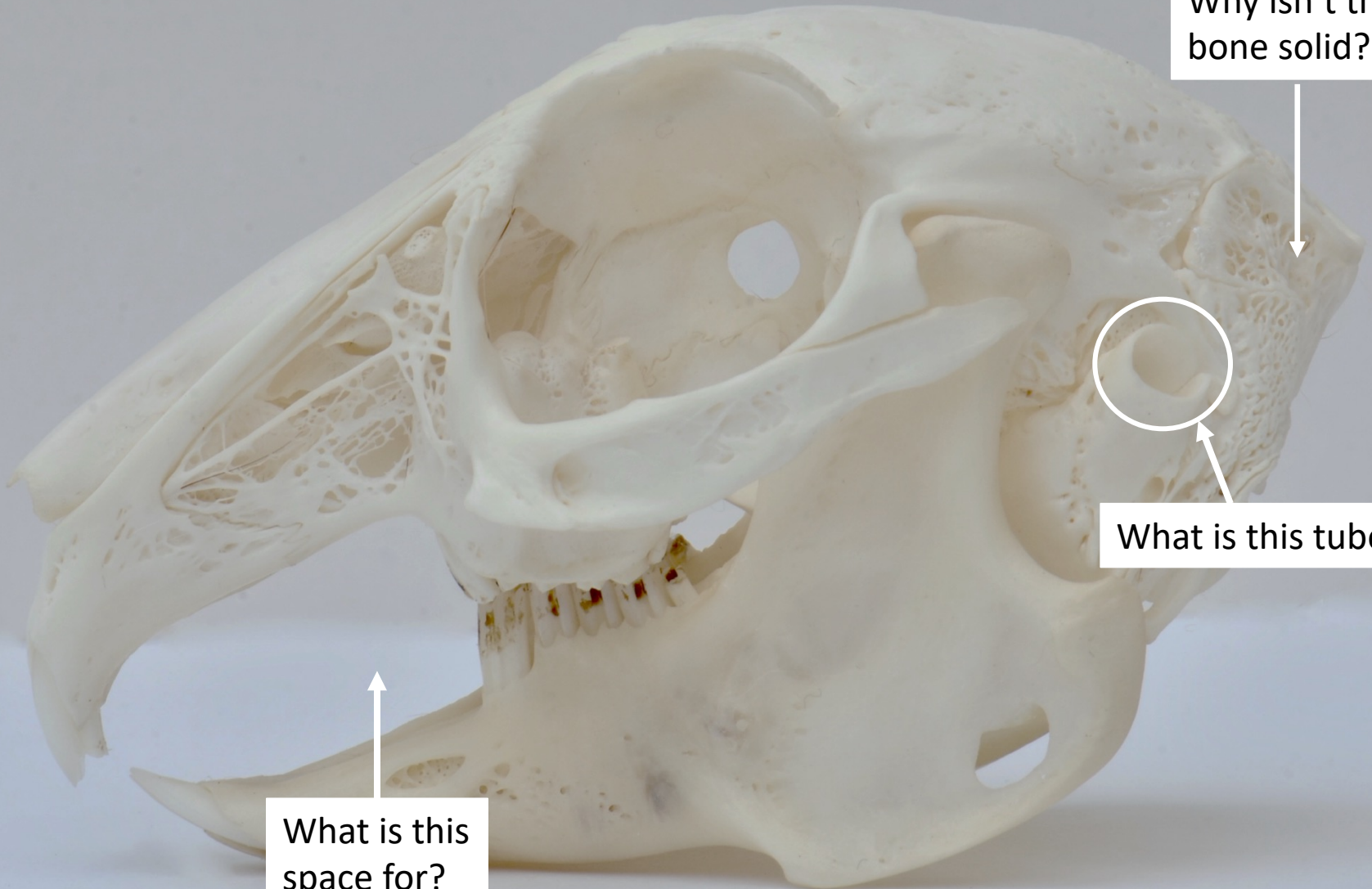
What kind of teeth do I have?

Where do my eyes go?

Why isn't this bone solid?

What is this tube?

What is this space for?



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

What kind of teeth do I have?

Big incisors, to nibble off grass and gnaw at tough food

Where do my eyes go?

This is one of the huge eye sockets, high up the head

Why isn't this bone solid?

A lighter skull means the rabbit can move quickly.

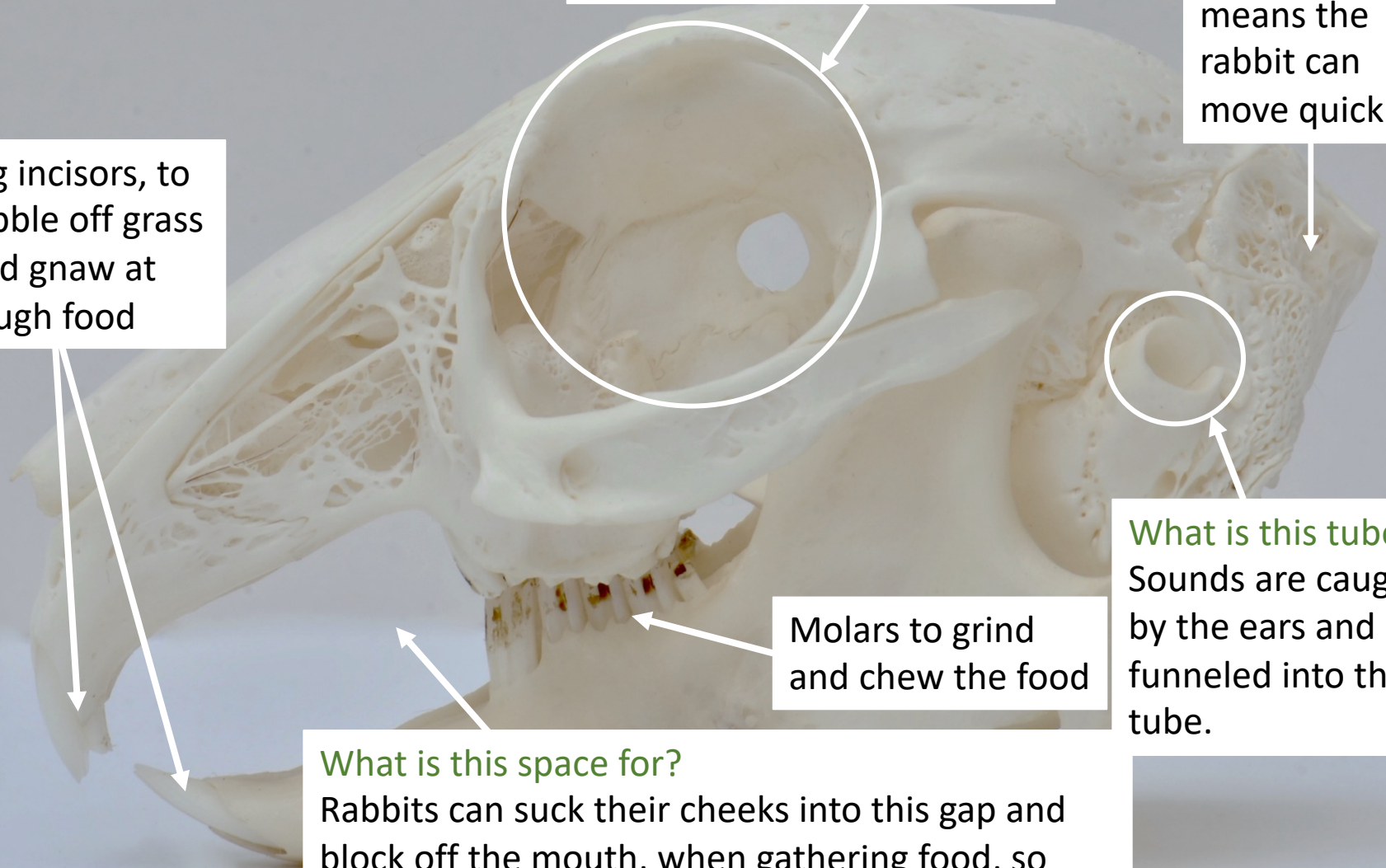
What is this tube?

Sounds are caught by the ears and funneled into this tube.

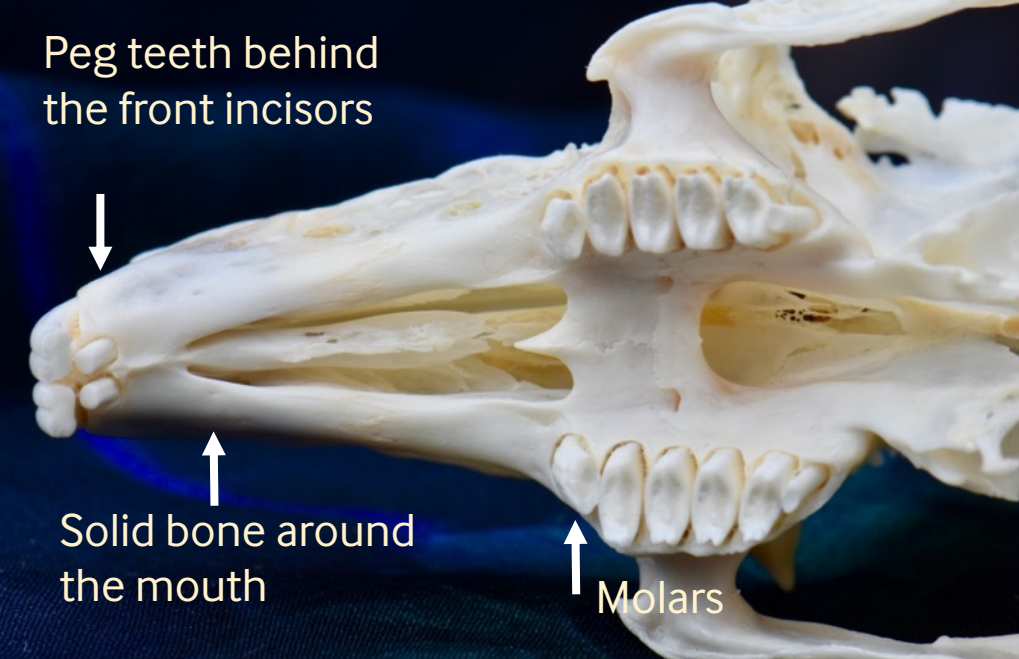
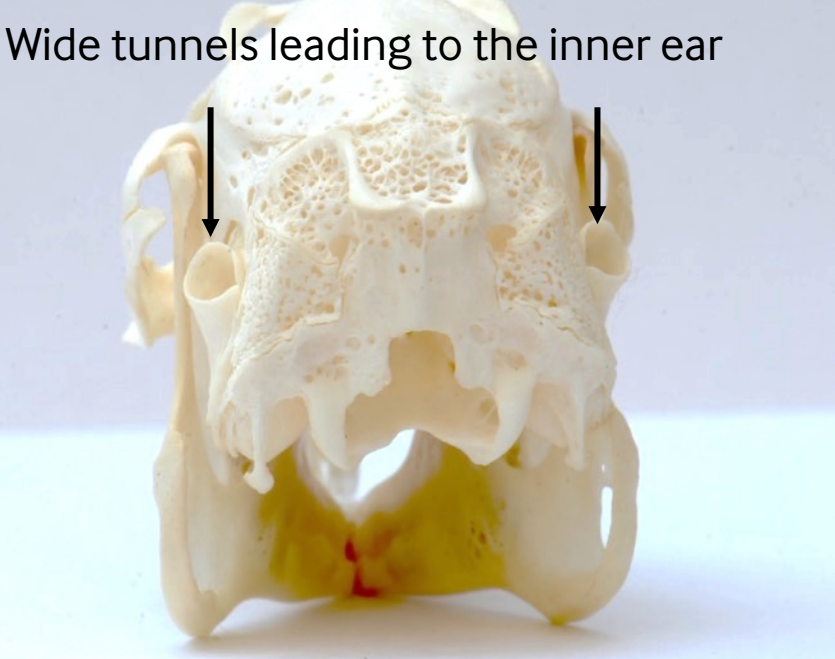
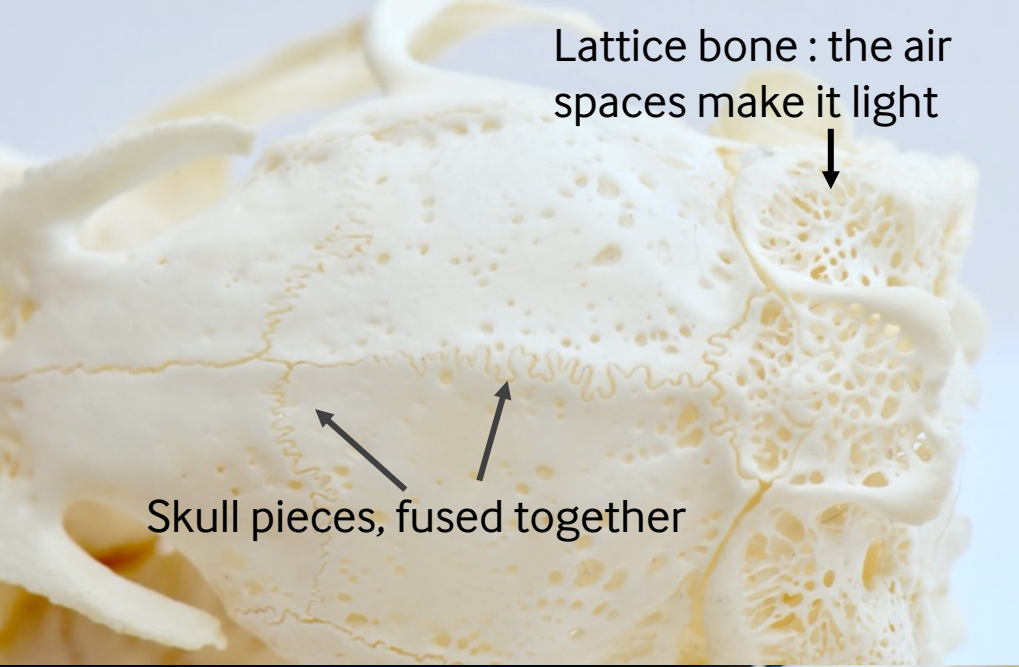
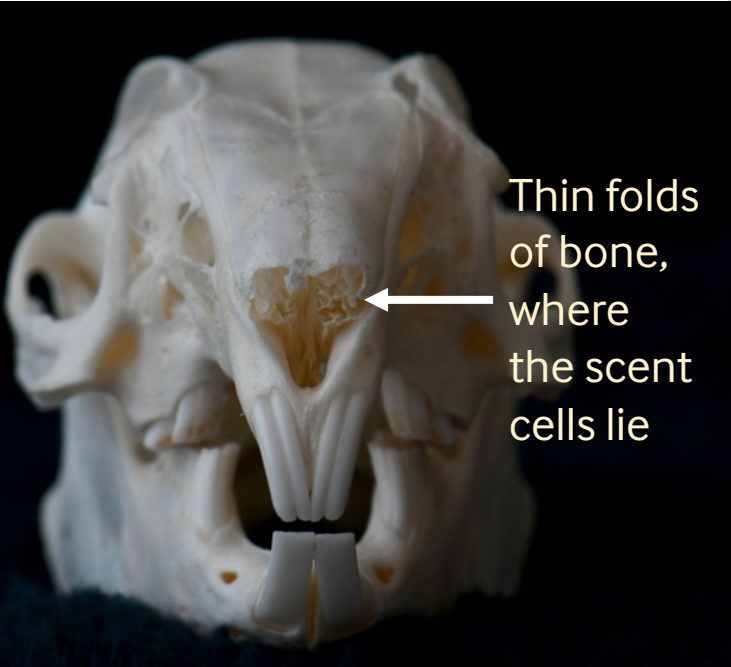
Molars to grind and chew the food

What is this space for?

Rabbits can suck their cheeks into this gap and block off the mouth, when gathering food, so they don't choke.



# Rabbit's skull - what else can you see in these pictures?



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



# 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



Deer



Fox



Hedgehog

# Extra Background Information for Teachers

- Rabbits' food passes through their digestive system twice. **They eat their droppings, first time round.** This is how they have adapted to break down tough plant matter and get nutrition from it.
- The gap in the mouth between the incisors and molars is called the '**diastema**'. All rodents have one. Rabbits have an extra pair of incisors, called 'peg teeth', in their top jaw but not the bottom.
- Rabbits' **incisors keep growing** throughout their life. They have no roots.
- Rabbits live in a network of underground tunnels and chambers with other rabbits in their family. Their home is called a '**burrow**' or '**warren**'.
- **Habitat.** Rabbits live where the soil is light and easy to dig and where it drains well, so their burrows will not be waterlogged or flooded. They prefer sandy soil, sand dunes, fields, farmland, moors, heaths and parks.
- **Deer** are herbivores and have a similar diet to rabbits. They have no upper incisors. Deer are also prey animals, with large eyes, facing sideways to watch for danger. See the Deer 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-rabbit/>

The Wildlife Trusts

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

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

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

The British Wildlife Centre

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





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

