

Name _____

Speaking of Sharks

Decide which word from the glossary best completes the sentences below. Write the correct word in the blank. Each glossary word is used only once.

Glossary

carnivores: animals that eat meat.

cartilage: light, tough, flexible material that forms or connects parts of the skeleton.

gills: organs of a fish's body that absorb oxygen from water.

maligned: to be hated or treated like a villain.

prey: animals that are hunted by other animals for food.

pups: baby animals, such as baby sharks, seals, or dogs.

species: a group of animals whose members share the same characteristics; members of one species are different in some ways from members of another species—for example, polar bears are different from grizzly bears.

surface: the top or uppermost part of something.

Sharks are fish. There are all kinds of sharks; in fact, more than 350 _____ live in the world's oceans and rivers. They range in size from 6 inches to more than 40 feet long. Some swim in shallow water, near the _____. Others live deep below.

Sharks breathe through their _____. Some have to keep moving in order to breathe. Unlike most fish, sharks don't have bones. Their skeletons are made of _____. (Your nose and ears are also made of this material. To see what it feels like, gently bend your ears with your fingers.)

Shark babies are called _____. As soon as they're born, they're on their own. And they'd better skedaddle quickly—or mom might eat them! All sharks are _____. Fish and seals are their favorite meals. Because sharks can't chew, they gulp down big bites of food or swallow their _____ whole.

Sharks are also predators—animals who have to hunt for their food. Bears, tigers, and lions are predators, too. They hunt and eat other animals, just like sharks do. But people don't usually think of sharks the same way they think of other predators.

Sharks are _____, which means many people don't like them. They don't feel sorry for them or worry about them becoming endangered. One reason is that sharks aren't cute and furry. In books and movies, they are portrayed as monsters. As a result, most people don't understand how important they are to our environment. They don't realize what could happen to oceans and ocean animals if sharks disappeared.

