

Comparing Teeth

Summary

In this activity, we will be looking at two animals that lived in the Pleistocene (Ice Age) that lasted from about 2,580,00 to 11,700 years ago. We often think of mammoths during the ice age, but mastodons were around, too, and even right here in Ohio. Let's take a closer look at their teeth and see how they compare.

Materials

- Sandpaper
 - *A nail file/emery board is a good alternative.*
- Scrap block of wood or small branch or twig
 - *Any size or shape will do fine. This will represent grasses.*
- Piece of paper
 - *This can be any scrap paper you have lying around. This will represent leaves.*
- Scissors
- Mirror

Steps to Follow *(All activities must be done with adult supervision)*

1. You can easily tell the difference between these two animals by looking closely at their teeth.
 - a. *What kind of food do you think these animals ate? Plants or meat?*
 - b. *What do you think their teeth looked like?*
2. Using your sandpaper, rub it on the paper (leaves) and the piece of wood (grasses).
 - a. *Which material did the sandpaper affect/damage the easiest?*
 - i. *Mammoths are herbivores (plant eaters) living in the grasslands and tundra. Their large flattened teeth had lots of ridges or cusps that help grind down the grasses.*
3. Using your pair of scissors, cut the paper and wood/twig.
 - a. *Which material did the scissors affect/damage the easiest?*
 - i. *Mastodons are herbivores living in wooded areas. Their large wide teeth had more pointed ridges that help them crush down the branches and leaves.*
4. Using a mirror look at your own teeth and make some observations.
 - a. *What shape are your teeth?*
 - b. *What kinds of foods can you eat?*
 - c. *We have flat teeth with a few ridges to crush down plant material, and sharper front teeth that help us tear through meats. As omnivores, we are able to eat many kinds of food, thanks to our teeth.*

Ohio Learning Standards

Gr.3 History 1, Gr.3 History 1, Gr.5 History 1, Gr.6 History 1, 1.LS.1, 1.LS.2, 2.LS.2

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

3-LS4-3, 4-LS1-1