

# BIG Zoo Lesson: SKULLS

**Big Idea:** Scientists can learn about the animals by looking at their skulls.

**Focus Question:**

**General Concepts:**

Structure and Function  
 Classification  
 Adaptations  
 Predator-Prey  
 Relationships  
 Sensory characteristics

**VOCABULARY**

**Canine**  
**Carnivore**  
**Crepuscular**  
**Diurnal**  
**Habitat**  
**Herbivore**  
**Incisors**  
**Mandible**  
**Molars**  
**Monocular vision**  
**Nasal passage**  
**Nocturnal**  
**Omnivore**  
**Orbit**  
**Palate**

**Lincoln Brick Park can provide these skulls:** *(Please do not allow touching skulls)*

*Deer—fox—beaver—bear—raccoon—bird—eagle—owl—turkey—hawk—bat—snake*

**Documents:**

- o Arizona Skulls: Wildlife Skull Activities

**Notice these things when you learn about skulls:**

Eye placement  
 Size  
 Nasal cavity  
 Teeth  
 Size of skulls

**Questions:**

1. What kind of diet would this animal eat?
2. Is the animal carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore? Why?
3. Could this be a predator or prey animal?
4. How does this skull compare to your observation animal?
5. How might this skull compare with one of the dinosaurs (or other extinct animals)?

**Expansion:**

Divide class into small groups of students. Select different skulls (herbivore, carnivore, omnivore) for small groups to draw in detail, label and write notes about each skull, 8-10 minutes for each sketch. Can keep the identity of skulls a mystery until the debriefing activity.

Debriefing: teacher engages students in discussion about the identity of each animal.

**Website:**

Skulls Lesson Plan—Mammal Basics  
[www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/lpskullscience.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/lpskullscience.pdf)