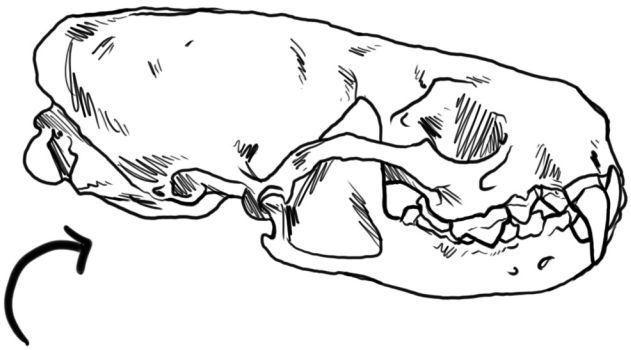
Name: Date:

Predator vs. Prey!

It's eat or be eaten in the Animal Kingdom!

What does that mean? An animal is either a **predator** that eats other animals, or **prey** that is eaten by other animals. Some animals are both, but no animal is neither.

How can you tell if an animal is primarily a predator or predominantly prey? Many predators have features that make them **successful hunters** of other animals, and many prey animals have features that help them **detect and escape** predators.



This is the skull of a mink.
It is a **predator**.

This is the skull of a muskrat.
It is a **prey animal**.

What differences do you see between the two skulls?
List them below.

You probably noticed that the two animals have very different teeth. The mink, a **predator**, has **sharp teeth** for catching prey and slicing meat. The muskrat, a **prey animal,** does not need to hunt for its food. Its teeth are **flat and blunt,** perfectly suited for its plant-based diet.

You may have also noticed a difference in the position of the **eye sockets.** This difference is easier to see from the front.

The mink, a predator, has eyes on the front of its head that face forward. Many predators have **forward-facing eyes,** which allows them to focus on their prey for a more accurate attack.

The muskrat, a prey animal, has **eyes on the sides** of its head. The position of its eyes allows it to see almost everything around it. With a wider **field of vision,** it can pick out predators before they pounce!

List two predators and their preferred prey below.

Take a closer look at the two skulls from the front. See the thin, wrinkly bones in the nose? Those are the **nasal turbinates.** One of the functions of the nasal turbinates is to increase the **surface area** of the inside of the nose so more scent particles can be absorbed.

Many predators like the mink have a **keen sense of smell** to help them sniff out prey. They have **complex, well-developed nasal turbinates.**

Prey animals like the muskrat don't rely on their sense of smell as much, so they don't need a lot of surface area to absorb scents. **Their nasal turbinates are simple and reduced.**

The bodies of predators and prey animals have many other adaptations that help them hunt or avoid being hunted. A cat has **sharp claws** for catching and a rabbit has **strong rear legs** for leaping.

Can you think of more? List at least three features in the space below and explain what they're for.