

Shark Search

Museum
at Home

Natural History



A skeleton of cartilage and special skin make sharks lighter and speedy swimmers.



Basking sharks are the largest fish in Irish waters.

Fishy Facts

What makes a shark different from other fish? Most fish have a skeleton made of bone and are covered in lots of scales. Sharks have a skeleton made of **cartilage** – just like our ears and nose. Shark skin feels rough to touch, like sandpaper. Their skin is covered in tiny teeth-like “**denticles**”. At the National Museum of Ireland – Natural History there are about 5,500 fish in the collections, including sharks, like this basking shark hanging from the ceiling in the Museum.

museum

National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Fintastic!

Sharks use their large **pectoral fins** on the side of their bodies to help them swim from the deep ocean to the sunny surface. The large fin on their back is called the **dorsal fin** and helps to give them balance. The **caudal fin** or tail helps to push them forward as they swim.



Challenge!
How many gill slits can you count on the side of its head?

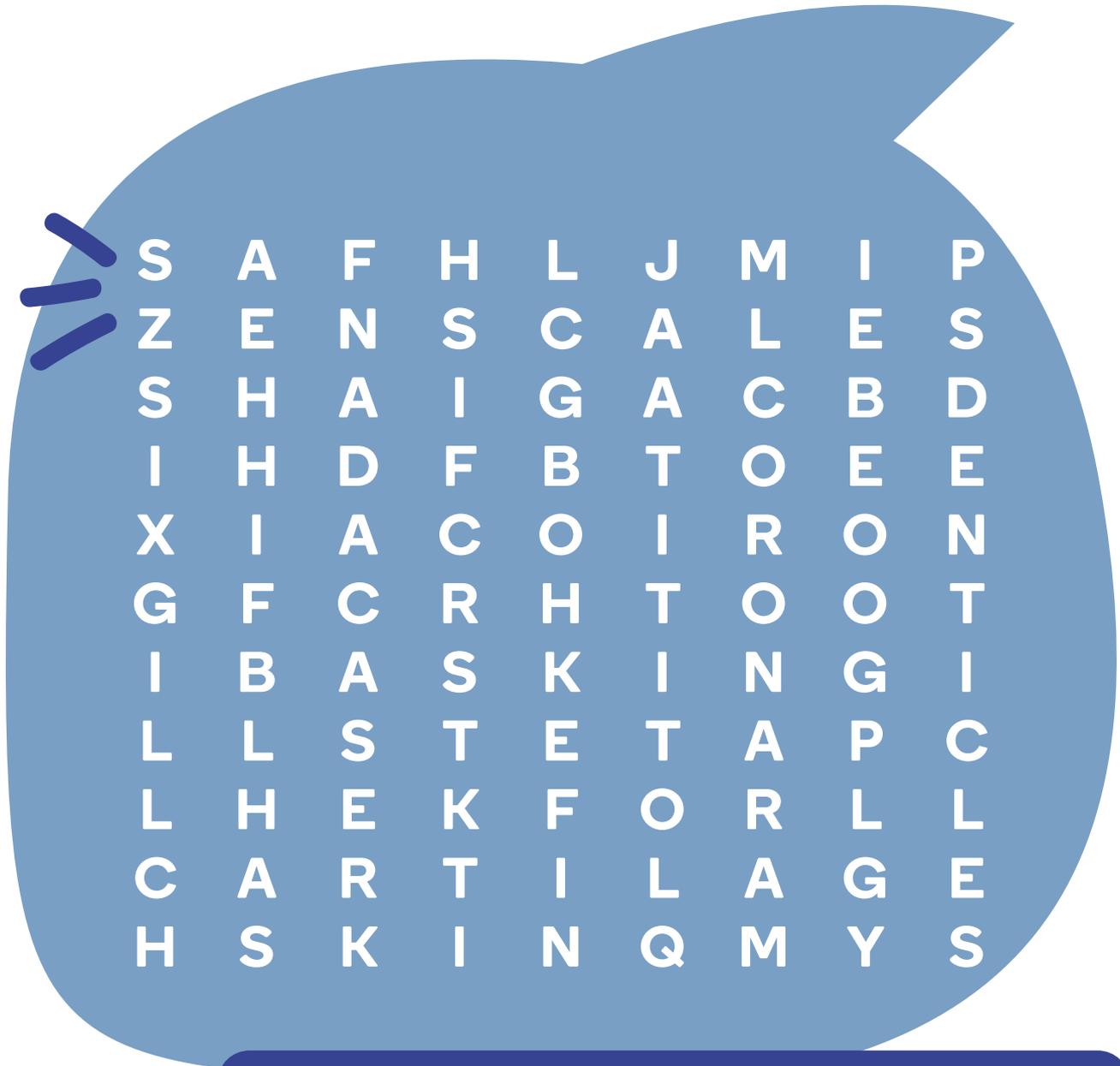
A shark on display in the Museum showing its gill slits and pectoral fin.

Gills Galore!

Sharks breathe underwater through their **gills**, like other fish. But their gills look different. They have between 5-7 **gill slits** or openings on the side of their heads, while other fish have only one opening. Some sharks need to keep swimming all of the time so that they can breathe through their gills, while others can rest happily on the sea floor and still breathe.

The Shark Search Word Search

Try the Shark Search Word Search and have fun finding a range of words related to sharks that live around the coast in Ireland.



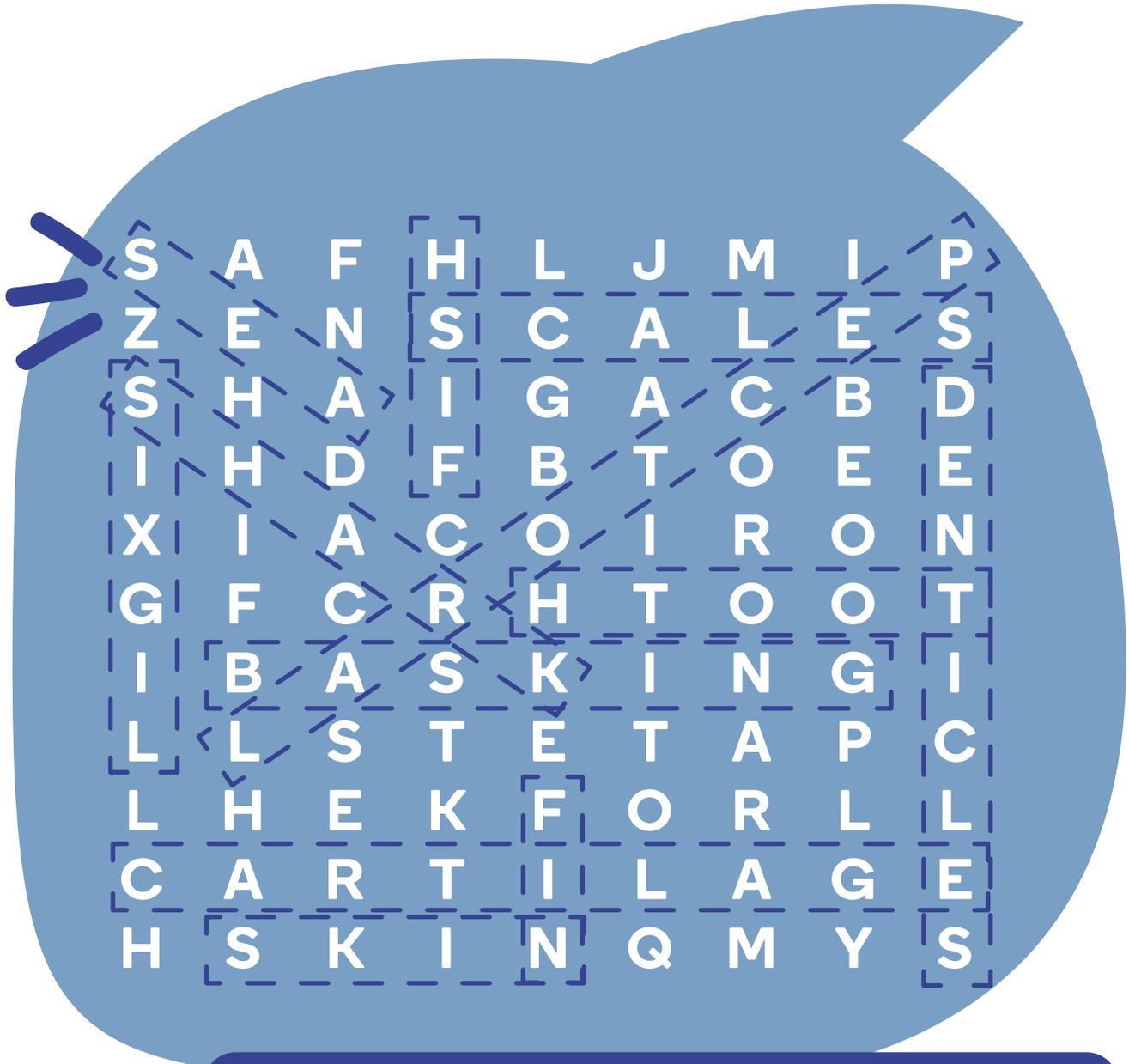
SHARK CARTILAGE SIXGILL BASKING SEA SKIN
DENTICLES TOOTH PECTORAL FIN FISH SCALES

Here's a tip! Search horizontally, vertically and diagonally and even backwards for all 12 words, put your skills to the test and see how many you can find! Don't forget to check your answers on the next page.

Here are the answers!

How did you get on?

Did you manage to find all 12 words?



SHARK CARTILAGE SIXGILL BASKING SEA SKIN
DENTICLES TOOTH PECTORAL FIN FISH SCALES

How many gill slits? The shark in the picture has six gill slits on the side of its head. It lives in Irish waters and is called the bluntnose sixgill shark.

3D Virtual Visit! Explore online at www.museum.ie and try out the 3D Virtual Visit for yourself. Can you find all the fish and sharks on display in the Irish Room?