

**CHAPTER 8****HANDOUT****Adaptations of the Beaver****BLM 8-2**

**Goal** • Identify adaptations of the beaver shown in Figure 8.3 on page 235 of the student textbook.

**What to Do**

Read through the following information about the beaver. In the column on the right, write down how you think the characteristic in the left column would help the beaver survive.

**The Beaver – *Castor Canadensis***

Characteristic	Advantage
The beaver is compact and rotund, which makes it slow on land, but it is a graceful, strong underwater and surface swimmer.	
The beaver's eyes have a transparent membrane that covers and protects the eyes.	
The beaver's nostrils and ears can be closed.	
The tail of a large beaver may be 30 cm long, up to 18 cm wide, and 4 cm thick! It is covered with leathery scales and sparse, coarse hairs. Although the tail is fat, it is flexible and muscular.	
On land, the tail supports the beaver when it is sitting or standing upright.	
The beaver's hind feet are large, with five long, blunt-clawed toes that are webbed.	
The beaver's forepaws are small, without webs, and the toes end in long sharp claws that are good for digging. These delicate paws are almost like hands.	
The second toe on each hind foot is double-clawed. The claws are hinged to come together like tiny pliers.	
The beaver's fur is very dense, with a mat of fine underfur about 2 cm long and an outer layer of heavy guard hairs that are about 7 cm long. Constant preening (grooming) and oiling keeps this dense pelt waterproof.	
The beaver's long, sharp, strong front teeth on top and bottom grow continuously and are hardened with dark orange enamel. As the upper and lower incisors are ground against each other through constant use, the outer tips of these teeth stay as sharp as chisels.	