The Shark

He seemed to know the harbour,
So leisurely he swam;
His fin,
Like a piece of sheet-iron,
Three-cornered,
And with knife-edge,
Stirred not a bubble
As it moved
With its base-line on the water.

His body was tubular
And tapered
And smoke-blue,
And as he passed the wharf
He turned,
And snapped at a flat-fish
That was dead and floating.
And I saw the flash of a white throat,
And a double row of white teeth,
And eyes of metallic grey,
Hard and narrow and slit.

Then out of the harbour,
With that three-cornered fin,
Shearing without a bubble the water
Lithely,
Leisurely,
He swam –
That strange fish,
Tubular, tapered, smoke-blue,
Part vulture, part wolf,
Part neither – for his blood was cold.

- E.J. Pratt
The Shark

Answer the following questions, writing FULL, COMPLETE SENTENCES:
- Do NOT write out the question. Use the wording from the question to help start your answer.
- Questions with an "#" means that you need to write more than one sentence for your answer.
- Questions with an "*" means that you need to include a quote in your answer.

1. In the first stanza, what gave the poet the impression that the shark knew the harbour?

2. “His fin, / Like a piece of sheet-iron…”
   a. What is this comparison called?
   b. Explain why the shark’s fin is like a piece of sheet-iron.

3. The poet repeats the words “tubular” and “tapered”. What pictures do these words give you of the shark?
   a. What are the four adjectives used to describe the shark’s eyes in stanza 2?
   b. What do these words suggest about the shark’s nature?

5. Why is the shark described as “part vulture” in stanza 3 (hint: think about what a vulture is, and what vultures and sharks have in common)?

6. Why is the shark described as “part wolf” in stanza 3 (hint: think about what a wolf is, and what wolves and sharks have in common)?

7. Each of the three stanzas described a different stage of the shark’s progress through the harbour. What are the three stages?#

8. Why does the poet use the word “shearing” to describe the movement of the shark?##

9. a. What other words in stanza 3 tell us more about the shark’s movements?
   b. What picture do they create in your mind?

10. What are the poet’s feelings towards the shark?*