

Nova's Nature Classification Challenge

Learning objective: To be able to use and create a classification key to identify living things.

Read the questions carefully and use your knowledge of classification keys to help Nova the owl sort the creatures she has spotted in the forest.

Word bank: Classification · Key · Invertebrate · Vertebrate · Characteristic · Branch · Identify

1. Nova has found a beetle, a frog, and a sparrow. Explain what a classification key is and why it is a useful tool for a scientist. (2 marks)

2. Look at these two questions from a key: 'Does it have a backbone?' and 'Does it have feathers?'. If you were classifying a goldfish, which question should you ask first? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

3. Imagine Nova is trying to identify an animal that has six legs and a hard outer shell. Is this animal a vertebrate or an invertebrate? How do you know? (2 marks)

4. Create a simple classification key with two branches to sort these three animals: a butterfly, a dog, and a ladybird. Use the starting question: 'Does it have a backbone?'. (3 marks)

5. Why is it important for the questions in a classification key to have clear 'Yes' or 'No' answers? (1 mark)

Draw: Draw a classification key that helps Nova the owl identify a squirrel, a spider, and a robin. Make sure each step has a clear question that results in a 'Yes' or 'No' path.



Extension challenge: Choose four different garden minibeasts. Create a complex classification key that uses at least three levels of 'branches' to identify them all.