Nova’s Garden Classification Quest

Learning objective: To identify and classify living things using a branching identification key.

Nova the owl is helping a local gardener sort the creatures found in their flowerbed. Use the branching key structure below to help Nova identify the mystery garden visitors. Follow the 'Yes' or 'No' paths for each creature to find their name. Once you have identified them, use the space provided to answer the questions about how classification keys work.

Word bank: Classification · Invertebrate · Vertebrate · Branching · Characteristic · Group · Identify

1. Nova finds a creature with six legs and no backbone. Using the rules of classification, explain why this creature is an invertebrate. (2 marks)

2. Look at these creatures: A Ladybird, a Woodlouse, a Garden Snail, and a Robin. If you were starting a new classification key, what is one 'Yes/No' question you could ask to separate the Robin from the others? (2 marks)

3. Why is it important for scientists to use the same classification keys when studying different habitats? (2 marks)

4. If a creature has a backbone, which main group does it belong to? (1 mark)

5. Create your own 'Yes/No' branch for a creature that has feathers. What would the next question be? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a simple branching key diagram that starts with 'Does it have legs?' and splits into two paths to classify a beetle and a snail.

Extension challenge: Imagine you have discovered a brand new species in the garden! Write a short description of its features and draw how it would fit into Nova's classification key.