

Nova's Classification Guide

Learning objective: To understand how to use a classification key to group living things.

Read the text carefully. Use the word bank to help you understand the words. Answer the questions in the boxes provided.

Nova the owl loves to study the natural world. She uses a classification key to sort animals into groups. A classification key is a clever tool. It uses a series of 'yes' or 'no' questions to help us identify living things.

To start, Nova asks: 'Does the animal have a backbone?' If the answer is 'yes', it is a vertebrate. If the answer is 'no', it is an invertebrate. Once the animal is in a big group, Nova asks more questions to get specific. She might ask: 'Does it have feathers?' or 'Does it live in water?'

By following the branches of the key, Nova can name any creature she finds in the forest. These keys are very helpful for scientists. They stop us from getting confused when we look at many different animals at once. With a good key, you can sort insects, birds, mammals, and fish easily. Nova says that being a scientist is just like being a detective. You just need to follow the clues step by step!

Word bank: Classification: sorting things into groups · Key: a set of questions to help identify things · Feature: a part of a living thing, like fur or feathers · Vertebrate: an animal with a backbone

1. 1. What does Nova call the tool that uses 'yes' or 'no' questions? (Literal) (2 marks)

2. 2. According to the text, what is the first question Nova asks to sort an animal? (Literal) (2 marks)

3. 3. Why does Nova think a classification key is helpful for scientists? (Inferential) (2 marks)

4. 4. If an animal does not have a backbone, which group does it belong to? (Inferential) (2 marks)

5. 5. Do you think using a classification key is a good way to learn about animals? Explain why. (Evaluative) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw an animal with a backbone and an animal without a backbone. Label them 'Vertebrate' and 'Invertebrate'.

Extension challenge: Pick two animals you know, like a dog and a snail. Write down one 'yes' or 'no' question you could use to tell them apart.