

Nova's Guide to Classification Keys

Follow the path, make the choice, and find the creature!

- A classification key starts with a group of living things and uses questions to sort them into smaller, specific groups.
- You must always choose questions that have a clear 'Yes' or 'No' answer to ensure the key works correctly.
- When creating a key, look for physical features like 'Does it have feathers?' or 'Does it have six legs?'.
- Branching keys are excellent tools for identifying creatures found in your local school garden or pond.
- By following the branches to the end of the key, you reach a final 'leaf' which identifies the specific organism.

Did you know? Did you know? Scientists have classified over 1.2 million different species on Earth! Using a classification key is like playing a game of '20 Questions'—each answer helps you narrow down exactly which living thing you are looking at.

Key vocabulary: Classification · Branching key · Characteristic · Vertebrate · Invertebrate · Identification