

Nova's Classification Key Challenge

Learning objective: To understand how to identify and classify living things using branched classification keys.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of how scientists group living things. Read the front of the card, think of the answer, and then check the back to see if you are correct!

What is a classification key?

A tool used by scientists to identify living things by answering a series of yes or no questions about their characteristics.

What is the main difference between a vertebrate and an invertebrate?

A vertebrate has a backbone (or spine), while an invertebrate does not have a backbone.

If a living thing has fur and produces milk for its young, what group does it belong to?

Mammals.

True or False: A classification key uses 'maybe' as an answer to questions.

False. Classification keys use clear 'yes' or 'no' questions to lead to the correct identification.

Name one characteristic you could use to split a group of birds into two smaller groups.

Examples include: Does it have webbed feet? Is it a flightless bird? Does it eat meat?

Which group of animals is cold-blooded, has dry scales, and lays eggs on land?

Reptiles.

Why do scientists use classification keys?

To help identify living things accurately and to organize them into groups based on their shared features.

What is a 'branch' in a classification key?

A point in the key where you follow a different path based on the answer (yes or no) to a question.

Which animal group has moist skin, lives both in water and on land, and usually starts life with gills?

Amphibians.

If you are using a key to identify a creature and you see it has six legs, what type of creature is it likely to be?

An insect (which is a type of invertebrate).