

Nova's Guide to Classification Keys

Learning objective: To describe how living things are classified into broad groups according to common observable characteristics and based on similarities and differences.

Use this writing frame to create a guide for identifying animals. Think like Nova the owl and use scientific observations to help others classify different creatures.

In the world of science, a classification key is a clever tool that helps us identify living things by asking a series of 'yes' or 'no' questions.

Word bank: characteristics · classification · vertebrate · invertebrate · dichotomous · habitat · similarities · differences · whereas · consequently · specifically

1. Introduction: Define what a classification key is and explain why scientists like Nova use them to sort animals... (2 marks)

2. The First Division: Start by describing how you would split a group of animals into two main categories, such as 'Does it have a backbone?'... (3 marks)

3. Narrowing it Down: Explain the next set of questions you would ask to sort your animals further. Remember to use clear, observable features like 'Does it have feathers?' or 'Does it live in water?'... (3 marks)

4. Scientific Reasoning: Describe why it is important to choose questions that only have two possible answers ('yes' or 'no') to ensure your key works correctly... (2 marks)

5. Conclusion: Summarise how using these keys helps us understand the diversity of life on our planet... (1 mark)

Extension challenge: Design a simple dichotomous key diagram below your writing to classify five different animals of your choice, such as a fish, a bird, an insect, a mammal, and a reptile.