

CLASSIFYING LIVING THINGS

KEY IDEAS

- Living things can be classified into groups and sub-groups
- Plants and animals are two of the main groups of living things
- Plants and animals can be sub-divided into many different categories and sub-categories

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What different groups could you use to sort different living things?
- What different groups could you sort animals into?
- What groups could you sort plants into
- How could you sort plants or animals of the same type into even smaller groups?

LIVING THINGS CAN BE SORTED INTO CATEGORIES AND GROUPS

- Scientists classify things into groups and sub groups according to their cell structures, how they take in nutrients, and how they reproduce.
- Organisms that are similar in these three ways end up in the same classification, or kingdom.
- In the past, living things were classified into three groups: the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom and the fungus kingdom.
- Because of the development of more powerful microscopes (for example, the electron microscope), scientists could see that some very small living things did not fit into these classifications and so they created two more kingdoms to accommodate them.
- These are known as the protista kingdom (for example, single celled algae) and the monera kingdom (different forms of bacteria).

- As scientific research continues other new groups may be found that do not fit into the existing kingdom classifications.

THE ANIMAL AND PLANT KINGDOMS

- The most distinct classifications of kingdoms of living things are the plants and the animal.
- Animals include mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds and arthropods (insects), among other groups.
- Humans are classified in the animal kingdom as mammals.

ANIMALS AND PLANTS CAN BE DIVIDED INTO SMALLER CATEGORIES

- Each group can be divided into smaller categories of classification.
- For example, reptiles in the animal kingdom can be classified into the common name categories of lizards, snakes, crocodiles, turtles etc
- Animals can also be separated into vertebrates and invertebrates.
- Invertebrates do not have backbones, vertebrates do.
- Similarly plants can be sorted into many different groups.

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