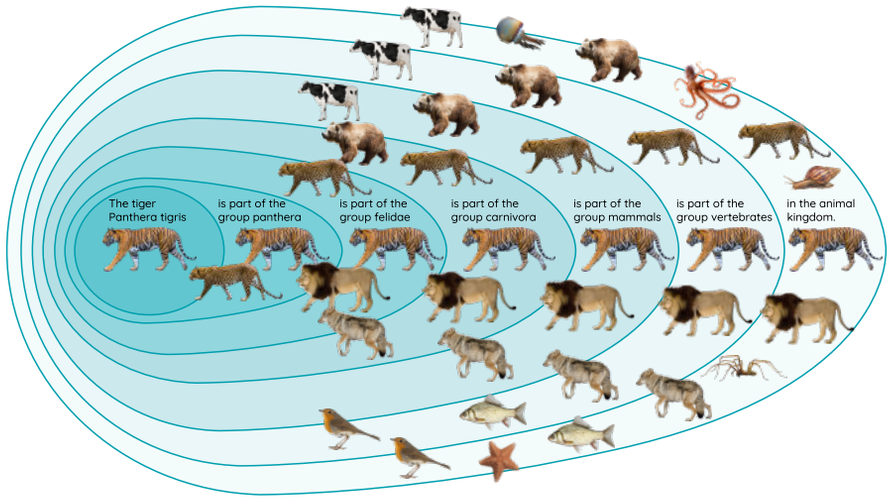
Classifying big and small

Carl Linnaeus

Carl Linnaeus developed the Linnaean system for sorting and classifying living things according to shared characteristics.



Number keys

The key is made from pairs of questions or statements.

The answers lead through the key until a group or name is reached.

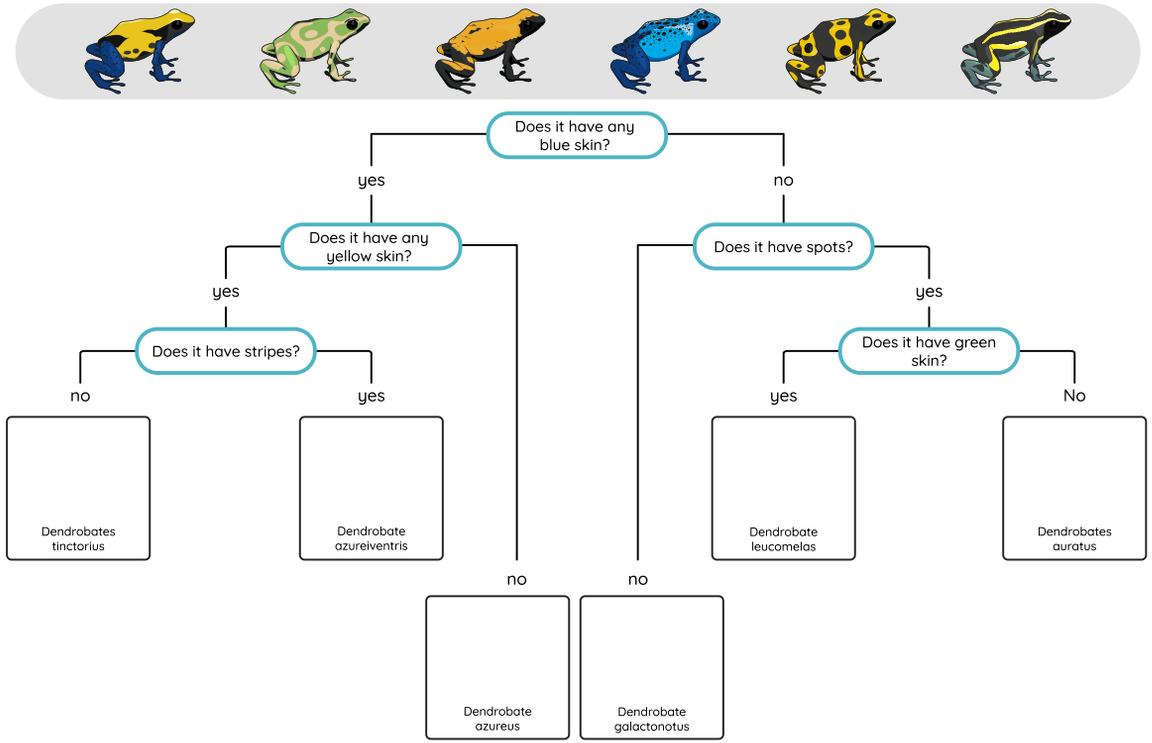
1a	Wings are covered by an exoskeleton.	Go to 2.
1b	Wings are not covered by an exoskeleton.	Go to 3.
2a	Exoskeleton is red.	Ladybird.
2b	Exoskeleton is green.	Green beetle.
3a	Wings are broad and wide.	Butterfly.
3b	Wings are long and narrow.	Dragonfly.

Classification keys

Classification keys can be used to sort and classify living things. They can use questions or statements.

Branching keys

Each branch of the key has a question. The answers will eventually lead to a final group or name.



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Vertebrates: animals with a backbone.

Fish	Amphibians	Reptiles	Birds	Mammals
• Wet scales. • Soft eggs. • Cold-blooded. • Gills.	• Moist skin. • Jelly-coated eggs. • Cold-blooded. • Gills/lungs/breathe through skin.	• Dry scales. • Leathery eggs. • Cold-blooded. • Lungs.	• Feathers. • Hard-shelled eggs. • Warm-blooded. • Lungs.	• Fur. • Produce milk. • Warm-blooded. • Lungs.

Invertebrates: animals without a backbone.

Worms	Snails	Spiders (arachnids)	Insects
• Soft bodied. • Segmented.	• Soft bodied. • External shell.	• Exoskeleton. • Two body segments. • Eight legs.	• Exoskeleton. • Three body segments. • Six legs. • Two pairs of wings (mostly.)

Plants

Mosses	Ferns	Conifers	Flowering plants
• Simple leaves. • No roots. • Spores.	• Feathery leaves (fronds.) • Roots. • Spores.	• Needle-like leaves. • Roots. • Seeds in cones.	• Broad or long leaves. • Roots. • Seeds (often in fruits.) • Flowers.

Micro-organisms: organisms that are too small to see with the naked eye, including bacteria, protists and some fungi.
Bacteria are classified according to their shape:

Spherical	Rod bacteria	Comma	Spiral	Corkscrew

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