



Animal Classifications

Virtual Classroom Extension

Objectives

This activity is designed to help your at-home student(s) recognize themselves as scientists and think critically about problem-solving. The goal is to instill classification concepts through discovery and to encourage using scientific thought processes. As with all lessons provided, please feel free to adapt them according to your students' abilities. Take these ideas, make them your own and your students will have a greater chance at success.

Materials

An assortment of small household objects, toys, or assorted candy (15-30 different pieces). There should be items of different shapes and sizes that can be grouped together in several different ways. You should not include identical pieces. Alternatively, if it is a nice day and you can go outside, you can have your student collect small rocks, twigs, and leaves. They will need a bag or bucket to hold their items. If you go this route, do not allow your students to pick up trash or animal waste. Make sure to avoid poison ivy if it is nearby. Ensure that your students wash their hands after the activity.

Procedures

1. Start by discussing the Animal Classifications video posted by Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (<https://resourcelibrary.clemetzoo.com/Area/21>). Consider the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - a. What was your favorite part of the video and why?
 - b. Which animal did you like the best?
 - c. What were some similarities between all the animals?
 - d. How were the animals different?
 - e. Why might there be differences between animals? How do those different traits help the animals survive in their habitats?
 - f. How might those differences help scientists group animals into categories?
2. Tell your at-home students that they are going to be able to practice their classification skills. For this activity, they will pretend to be scientists exploring the jungle. On their expedition, they found lots of new species. It is now their job to classify, or group, those species. (If you are going outside, this is where your students can collect different items. Tell them that none of the items should look exactly the same.)

3. Set out the items that will be classified. Tell your at-home students that these are the scientific samples they collected on their expedition. They now need to find ways that the items are similar or different. Help your at-home students group the items based on similarities. They should have at least three different piles of items.
4. After all the items are grouped, discuss their decisions with them. Have them explain what each pile is and how they decided which items went into which piles. Other questions to ask include:
 - a. Were there any items that fit into multiple piles? If so, how did you decide which pile it went in?
 - b. Were there any items that did not fit into any piles?
 - c. If there were multiple students working together, did they ever disagree on which pile an item went into? If so, how did they come up with a final decision?

Ohio's Learning Standards

Science Content Standards
Grade K Life Science Topic: Physical and Behavioral Traits of Living Things K.LS.1: Living things have specific characteristics and traits.
Grade 1 Life Science Topic: Basic Needs of Living Things 1.LS.2: Living things survive only in environments that meet their needs.
Grade 3 Life Science Topic: Behavior, Growth and Changes 3.LS.2: Individuals of the same kind of organism differ in their inherited traits. These differences give some individuals an advantage in surviving and/or reproducing.