CLASSIFICATION AND KEYS LESSON PLAN

Teach students how to classify Galapagos animals and plants into groups of similar organisms, using keys. This section explains how taxonomic keys can be used to classify living organisms.

Resources required: Species photo cards, using keys handout, island life handout, access to quiz.

1. FIRE STARTER

Hand out 'species photo cards' to pairs or small groups of students. Ask them to sort the species into groups of organisms with similar characteristics. Discuss and explain the groups that they have created.

2. GAINING GROUND

Introduce students to the Taxonomic Chain. Use the 'species classification' handout to aid explanation of the various levels, illustrated with the killer whale example. Explain how keys are used to classify animals.

Provide students with the 'using keys' handout. Ask them to select a photo card and use the key to identify what animal it is.

3. MAKING WAVES

Present students with the 'island life' handout. Ask them to sort their photo cards according to the taxonomic grouping on the handout. As a group, encourage students to discuss the importance of grouping organisms.

4. FUTURE FOCUS

To conclude ask students to complete the quiz for this activity for either an extension or a homework task. Or find out about the work of Carl Linnaeus and write a short biography of his life and role as a pioneer in science.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To know that organisms can be classified according to their physical characteristics.
- To understand how keys can be used by scientists to identify species.
- To appreciate that **taxonomic classification** is an important tool for scientists.

STUDENTS' OUTCOMES:

- To give examples, illustrating how organisms can be differentiated and grouped.
- To explain how keys can be used to classify organisms. Students should discuss the different levels of the taxonomic chain.
- To discuss the importance of taxonomic classification, with reference to scientific work.

KEY VOCABULARY:

Classification, taxonomy, taxonomic chain, key, kingdom, phylum, vertebrate, invertebrate