

There are about nine million different types of living thing on Earth – and they are all named!



Which species do you think humans are the most similar to?



In fact around 98% of chimp genes (tiny parts in all your cells which give you certain characteristics, e.g. colour of eyes, and which can be passed on to the next generation) are the same as human genes, but there are obvious differences in appearance and behaviour. Can you think of some differences?

chimps: more hairy, different shaped jaw & nose, move around on all 4 limbs, have longer arms & shorter legs

Sorting this large number of species into groups based on similarities helps people to know which living thing is being talked about. Scientists can be sure they are investigating the same species. Two, very large, groups of living things are animals and plants. We are part of the animal kingdom. These groups are however still too big (about 7.8 million animal species) so they have to be sub-divided. Animals are split into vertebrates and invertebrates. *Can you explain what those words mean?*

Invertebrates have no backbone (spine) and vertebrates do.



There are far more invertebrates than vertebrates – some are very simple like sponges, others are more complex like insects, spiders (arachnids) and molluscs.



Vertebrates are split again into fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.



Am I a reptile or an amphibian?

[Click here to watch a clip about animal classification: http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zpqcfrd](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zpqcfrd)

Stop it at 6m20 and discuss the classification of dolphins. Play the final part of the BBC clip.

Plants can be grouped into flowering and non-flowering (e.g. ferns & mosses) plants.

Branching database – dichotomous key

Minibeasts



spider



woodlouse



snail



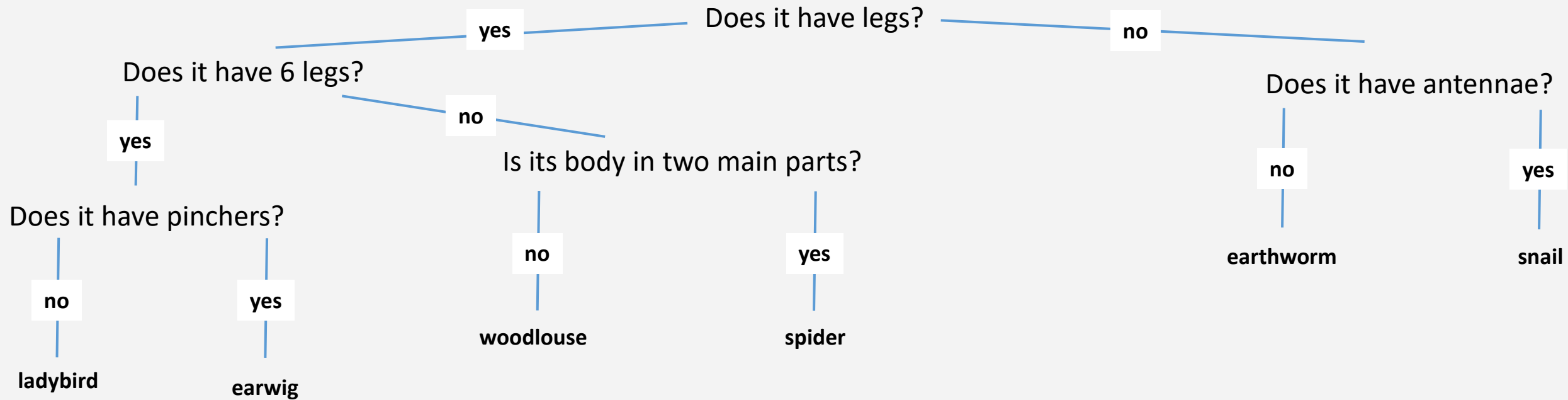
ladybird



earthworm



earwig



Sorting Minibeasts – as questions and answers



spider



woodlouse



snail



ladybird



earthworm



earwig

1. Does it have legs?

Yes – go to 2

No – go to 3

2. Does it have 6 legs?

Yes – go to 4

No – go to 5

3. Does it have antennae?

Yes – It is a snail

No – It is an earthworm

4. Does it have pinchers?

Yes – It is an earwig

No – It is a ladybird

5. Is its body in two main parts?

Yes – It is a spider

No – It is a woodlouse

Create your own dichotomous key using these minibeast images :



Extn. Can you create any other dichotomous keys?