

Scientific Classification of Animals

Name _____

Introduction:

There are more than nine hundred thousand different types of animals. To help sort them into groups, a system of grouping or *classification* has been developed. You will be familiar with the names of some of the groups already, such as *mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects*.

Animals are sorted by their differences, but also by what they have in common. Each type of animal is given a **scientific name** as well as a **common one**. You are a type of animal. Your common name is **human**. Your scientific name is **Homo sapiens**. Some animals are easily confused by their common names. For example, a “gopher” may be a very different animal depending on what part of the country you are from.

There are different **levels of classification**: phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species. To explain how this works, this table shows how some well-known animals are sorted.

Dogs and wolves have many features in common so their classification is similar right down to species level. A crayfish is quite different from a dog, so you would expect them to be sorted right at level one. Look at the table below.

Level	Dog	Wolf	Fox	Crayfish
Kingdom	Animalia	Animalia	Animalia	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata	Chordata	Chordata	Arthropoda
Class	Mammal	Mammal	Mammal	Crustacea
Order	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore	Decapoda
Family	Candidae	Candidae	Candidae	Palinuridae
Genus	Canis	Canis	Vulpes	Jasus
Species	familiaris	lupes	vulpes	lalandei

From this chart you can see that dogs, wolves and foxes are in the same animal **family**, but are not the same **species**.

The scientific name of an organism is derived by using the Genus and Species words. For example, a dog is *Canis familiaris* (the Genus is capitalized and the species is lower case)

1. At which level are dogs and wolfs separated?
2. At what level are dogs and foxes separated?
3. What is the scientific name of crayfish?
4. Which animals were most alike?
5. Which animal was most different from the others?
6. How are the scientific names written?
7. Why are common names commonly confused?
8. Which level has the most different kinds types of animals?
9. Which level only has ONE specific type of animal?
10. What do animals that are in the same Order have also have in common?
11. What Phylum do Humans belong to?