

Lesson: What's this fish?

Phase of learning

Years 7 - 8

WA Curriculum

K-10 Science

Region

North Coast, Gascoyne Coast, West Coast, South Coast, Indian Ocean Territories

Summary

Students will use a simple dichotomous key to identify various species of fish.

Outcomes

- Students will identify distinguishing features for a number of species of bony fish
- Students will learn how characteristics can assist in the classification of organisms
- Students will use a simple dichotomous key to identify various species of fish

Duration

30 minutes

Preparation

Background information about biological classification can be found in the Fact Sheet: [Classification](#).

This lesson is an introduction on using a dichotomous key and assumes students have some basic knowledge of features of fish.

The Lesson: [Lolly bags](#) provides a broad overview on what a dichotomous key is and may precede this lesson.

Students will also require a copy of Student Resource Sheets: [Fish Dichotomous Key](#) (either individual or in pairs) and [Creature Feature](#) (in pairs or small groups). Each student will also require a copy of Student Worksheet: What's this fish? for your chosen area. You may also like to provide students with a copy of the Poster: [Bony Fish – external anatomy](#).

The Lesson: Fishy Features is an extension of this lesson, where students will construct their own dichotomous key for a given number of species.

Western Australian curriculum

LEARNING AREA	STRAND	SUB-STRAND	CODES
Science	Science understanding	Biological sciences	ACSSU043
Science	Science understanding	Biological sciences	ACSSU111
Science	Science inquiry skills	Processing and analysing data and information	AC SIS129

Steps

1. Recall any prior learning about dichotomous keys – what is their purpose, how do you use them and what types of questions work in a dichotomous key?
2. Provide students with:
 - Student Resource Sheet: [Creature Feature](#)
 - Student Worksheet: What's this fish? – for your chosen area(s) and
 - Student Resource Sheet: [Fish Dichotomous Key](#).

Using the information provided on the Student Resource Sheets: [Creature Feature](#), students will use the dichotomous key to identify the species they have on their worksheets.

3. Allow students time to complete the activity and then engage them in a discussion about the species they identified and any discrepancies between student identification.

Student worksheets

[What's this fish? North](#)

[What's this fish? Gascoyne](#)

[What's this fish? West](#)

[What's this fish? South](#)

[What's this fish? Indian Ocean Territories](#)

Student resource sheets

[Creature Feature](#)

[Fish Dichotomous Key](#)

Related resources

[Poster: Bony Fish - External Anatomy \(including information\)](#)

[Student Resource Sheet: Creature Feature](#)

[Student Resource Sheet: Fish dichotomous key](#)

[Student Worksheet: What's this fish? - Gascoyne](#)

[Student Worksheet: What's this fish? - Indian Ocean Territories](#)

[Student Worksheet: What's this fish? - North](#)

[Student Worksheet: What's this fish? - South](#)

[Student Worksheet: What's this fish? - West](#)

[Lesson: Fishy features](#)

[Fact Sheet: Classification](#)

[Lesson: Lolly bags](#)

[Poster: Marine Classification - Animals \(Primary\)](#)

[Poster: Marine Classification \(Senior\)](#)

Keywords

fish anatomy, features, classification, adaptations