

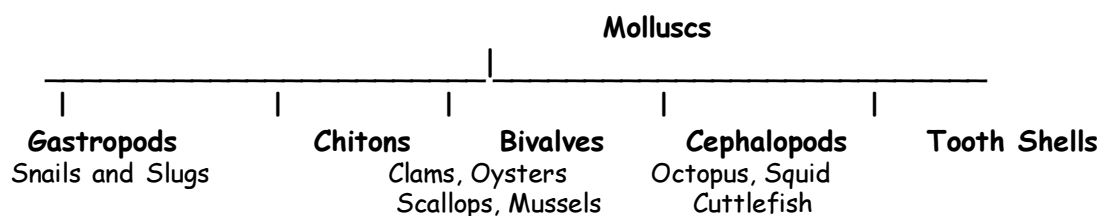


CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - Grade 6

Classification

Classification consists of putting things that resemble each other into categories. People use a form of classification in all aspects of their lives to organize things and put names on them so they can communicate with other people. For example pets are all animals but are put into categories like dog, cat, bird, and fish so we have a name that we can call them that everyone understands. These categories have smaller categories within them like Golden Retriever, Cocker Spaniel, and Poodle to indicate what kind of dog it is.

Octopuses are molluscs. Can you name other molluscs? What characteristics do octopuses have that make them molluscs? People, cats, dogs and whales are all mammals because they all breathe air, are warm blooded, all have hair at some time in their life and feed their young with milk.



Taxonomy

Taxonomy is the science of classifying plants and animals according to their presumed natural relationships.

Biologists that identify, describe and name the millions of organisms that inhabit Earth are called taxonomists. One of the tools they use to identify a plant or animal is the dichotomous key. These keys give the identifier a choice of (usually) two options such as "animal has 6 legs or animal has 8 legs" or "is it bigger than a bread box or smaller than a bread box?" By answering a series of questions in a key written by specialists, taxonomists can identify an organism they are not familiar with.

Give students a copy of the activity sheet "**A Taxonomic Key For Clothes**". Have them choose one article of clothing and key it out.

Microscopic World

When octopuses hatch from eggs they are very tiny, about 6 mm. long. They move to the surface of the ocean where they drift about and feed on even smaller animals, many of which you can only see with a microscope or magnifying glass. These microscopic animals feed on organisms even smaller than themselves called phytoplankton (plant plankton)

Draw a food web containing a baby octopus, phytoplankton, bacteria, zooplankton (**copepods**), a **jellyfish**, and a blue whale, indicating what would eat what.