

# NATURE

## Activity N04

### Theme

Class activity (CA). Students sort pictures or photos of animals into groups according to their characteristics. There is a teachers' aid included to assist in the process.

### Objectives

Taking observation and identification further into grouping and classifying of animals and plants. Encouraging students to think about how species are similar to

each other or how they are different. As well as classifying and grouping, the exercise also encourages closer examination and observation of nature in the locality.

### Curricular Strands

SESE, Science-Plant and animal life, Sort and group living things into sets according to observable features

### Skills

Questioning, observing, predicting, sorting, identifying

### Time

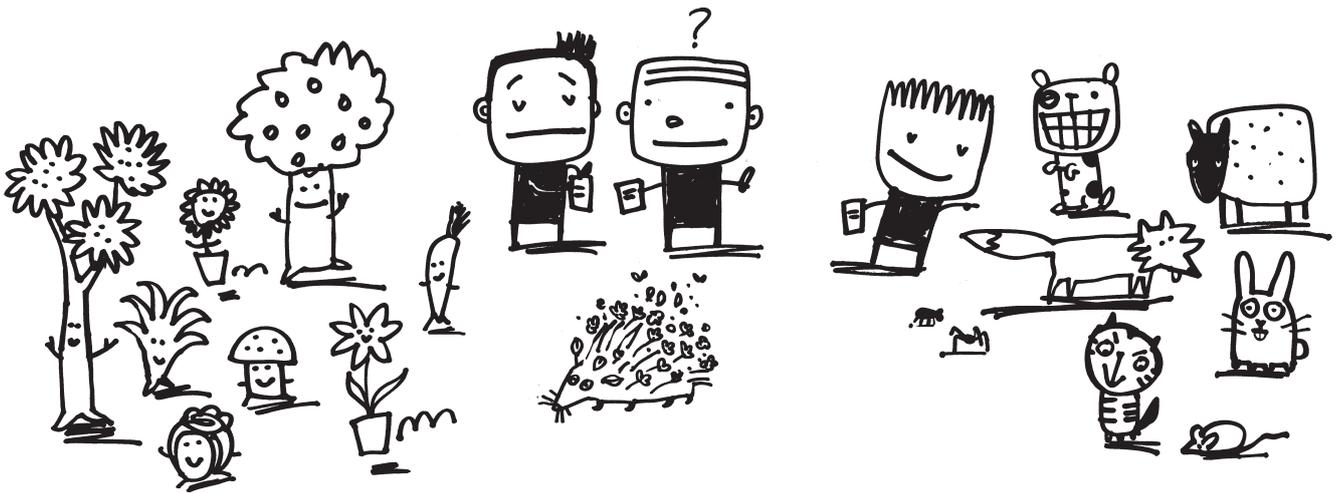
30 minutes

### Links to Green Schools

Common plants and animals in Ireland

# Sort it!

## PLANT AND ANIMAL CHARACTERISTICS



### WHAT YOU NEED

- Photos of some common wildflowers, insects, spiders, birds and other animals in Ireland

### WHERE TO GET THEM

- A colouring and guide book of common birds, and wildflowers is available from Sherkin Island Marine Station (sherkinmarine@eircom.net). A number could be obtained

- for each class group. The pages can be removed or photocopied to make sheets for sorting.
- Wildlife magazines and posters from ENFO will provide pictures of a number of wild Irish mammals (such as badger, deer, bats, rabbit, hare, stoat, pine martin, vole, mouse, red squirrel, grey squirrel and fox) and domestic animals (such as goat, horse, cow and sheep).

- Pictures of insects could be provided by the cut-outs of the INTO minibeasts identification keys in this pack

### WHAT YOU DO

- 1 Give each group of students in the class a collection of pictures and photos of Irish plants and animals.
- 2 The first task could be to sort all of the pictures into plants and animals.

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- 3 Students can then move on to sort the animals according to their different characteristics. This could be according to how many legs the animal has, what it eats, its shape or where it lives.
- 4 Students can decide as a group what pictures go together as long as they can explain their reasoning.
- 5 Each group should explain how they sorted their pictures and why.
- 6 The teacher could explain how animals are grouped under broad classifications, e.g. birds, insects, spiders, mammals, flowering plants and non-flowering plants.

### Questions

- 1 Did every group in the class place the pictures into the same groups?
- 2 When making a food chain, does any one food chain contain pictures from just one animal group?

### Go further

- 1 With the help of wildlife identification books, students could place animals into more detailed groupings.
- 2 Students could also try to assemble as many food chains as possible from the different plant and animal pictures.

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### **SORT IT!**

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR TEACHERS**

Carl Linnaeus devised the current system for classifying animals in the 1700s. Living organisms are classified and grouped according to their biological and physiological characteristics. Although developments in genetics have led to debate over the classification of some species, the Linnaeus system is still in use today. Organisms are named according to their generic group characteristics (genus) and their specific characteristics (species), e.g. **Homo sapiens**, commonly known as humans.

The attached classification key helps illustrate the idea of classification of organisms. It divides living things into:

- Plants and animals
- Vertebrates (animals with backbones) and invertebrates (animals without backbones)
- Cold-blooded vertebrates (fish, amphibians and reptiles) and warm-blooded vertebrates (mammals)

Further classification involves the diet of mammals and the physical form taken by invertebrates (presence, absence and number of legs, presence of shell or wings).

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### ANIMAL CLASSIFICATION

