

Classifying Animals

LAB-AIDS #550S

\$59.95

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This kit provides enough materials for a class of 32 working in 8 groups of 4. Each group receives a set of 18 Animal Cards, a set of 5 Kingdom Cards and enough worksheets and data classification sheets for each member of the group. There are no additional materials needed that are not provided in the kit.

Purpose:

This kit is designed to demonstrate the process of taxonomy, showing how organisms (specifically animals) are classified into groups in order to standardize their study throughout the world. It introduces the need for classification with a short lesson on exotic species, tying the concept to the necessity to be able to compare species from different areas. It is divided into 2 parts.

Part A: Exploring the Animal Kingdom

Each group of students is given a set of 18 Animal Cards. Each card has a color photo of the animal and a short description of the anatomical structures of the animal (including circulatory system, skeletal system, etc.) Students are instructed to come up with their own classification system and group the animals into 4-8 groups. A table is provided in the worksheets to record the groups and the reason for their classification. Groups would then share their results with the class to see similarities and differences in the classification. Differences in these results would then be used to illustrate why a common system is necessary.

Part B: A Biologist's Perspective

The second part of the lab requires a teacher lectures on the actual phyla of the Animal Kingdom. There are 6 phyla of the 35 that require explanation for this kit. They are: *Cnidaria*, *Platyhelminthes*, *Mollusca*, *Annelida*, *Arthropoda*, and *Chordata*. Students are instructed to modify their groups from Part A to the 6 phyla. The students share their final groups and reasons, and correct answers are given. A set of analysis questions is provided in the worksheet for assessment.

Assessment of the Kit:

This kit received positive reviews from our RET group. There are several benefits to this lab. Firstly, the animals used on the cards are not necessarily common, so thought is required in the classification process. Secondly, the tie-in to exotic species is important as several questions on the state assessment for Biology I deal with this concept. Thirdly, the first part of the lab includes inquiry skills, allowing students to create their own systems. Limitations of the kit were the focus on the old 5 Kingdom system, the fact that all card sets had the same 18 organisms (which doesn't represent the true variety of the Kingdom), and the inclusion of the Kingdom cards (which only had a definition of each kingdom and weren't really used in the lab).

Suggested Modifications:

Be sure to explain the current 3 Domain System and explain the reasons for using it instead of the old 5 Kingdom system. Perhaps more Animal Cards could be created to demonstrate more diversity. This lab is recommended and is highly usable.