

## Prehistoric Life Guided Tour Pre- or Post-Visit Classifying Animals Lesson Plan

Grade	Suggested Time	NGSS Connections
1-3	30 minutes	<p><b>1-LS1-1:</b> Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs.</p> <p><b>2-LS4-1:</b> Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.</p> <p><b>3-LS3-1:</b> Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence that plants and animals have traits inherited from parents and that variation of these traits exists in a group of similar organisms.</p> <p><b>3-LS4-2:</b> Use evidence to construct an explanation for how the variations in characteristics among individuals of the same species may provide advantages in surviving, finding mates, and reproducing.</p>

### **Learning Outcome**

Students will classify animals based on observable characteristics.

### **Materials Needed**

Copies of Animal Adaptations sheet (included in this lesson)

### **Background and Key Vocabulary**

Physical characteristics are different parts of what an animal looks like, such as hairy, scaly, feathery, and slimy.

### **Activity**

1. Explain to students that animals are classified by their physical characteristics. Let the students classify the animals based on physical characteristics they see. If necessary groups can be given to them (e.g. hairy, scaly, feathery and slimy) or some characteristic ideas (e.g. body covering, limbs, and backbone).
2. Students can cut out the animals and perform the task individually or in small groups. Cards can be added to or reduced in number depending on student level. With students who are familiar with classification, levels of hierarchy can be explored such as invertebrates vs. vertebrates.
3. Discussion of the groups can be with individual groups or as a class; there is also the opportunity to ask groups to present their ideas to the class. The idea is to explore different groupings and how difficult it can be to group an animal that is extinct. (What features did you use to group the animals? What group would you put your fossil in? Why is it harder to sort a fossil than an animal that is alive today?)
4. Review the idea of grouping organisms. (It is not always perfect – even scientists make mistakes! It is very hard to do with extinct animals for which we only have a few fossils. It helps us understand the relationships between animals.)

**Directions:** Cut out the animals on the following sheet and put them in groups based on their physical characteristics.





