

Shark Dichotomous Key

NAME _____ PER _____

A classification system is a way of separating a large group of closely related organisms into smaller subgroups. With such a system, identification of an organism is easy. The scientific names of organisms are based on the classification systems of living organisms. To classify an organism, scientists often use a dichotomous key. A dichotomous key is a listing of specific characteristics, such as structure and behavior, in such a way that an organism can be identified through a process of elimination.

First, use the generic shark picture below to help identify different types of fins present on sharks. Then, use the key on the back to identify the 14 sharks pictured. Finally, answer the analysis questions listed to the right.

