

Introduction to Animal Classification

* Classification Basics *

- All **organisms** (living things) are put into groups based on the traits they have in common.
- Organisms are grouped and regrouped until every organism in the group is one of a kind.
- There are seven levels of classification (subgroups) for each individual organism:
 1. Kingdom
 2. Phylum (Division)
 3. Class
 4. Order
 5. Family
 6. Genus
 7. Species
- Names are based on the Latin language, because it is the common scientific language.
- The *Genus* and *species* names are the most specific, and both are used in identifying unique organisms. This system is called binomial nomenclature (two-names). The names are written in *italics*, with the Genus name being capitalized and the species name being lower-case. (e.g. *Canis familiaris*)
- The two-word name is called the organism's **scientific name**. This system helps to avoid communication errors.
- The science of classifying and naming organisms is called **taxonomy**.
- Classification today is based on a five-kingdom system. These include
 1. Animal
 2. Plant
 3. Fungi
 4. Protista
 5. Monera
- To be classified in the Animal kingdom, five characteristics must be present:
 1. It must have many cells.
 2. It cannot make its own food. (They eat other organisms.)
 3. It must have eukaryotic cells. (They have a true nucleus.)
 4. It must move about.
 5. It must digest its food.
- The branch of science that deals with the study of animals is called **zoology**.