

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2: Using and Constructing a Dichotomous Key – BACKGROUND**

Knowing the similarities and differences in organisms can help not only to figure out their phylogeny (evolutionary history), but also to help sort and identify them.

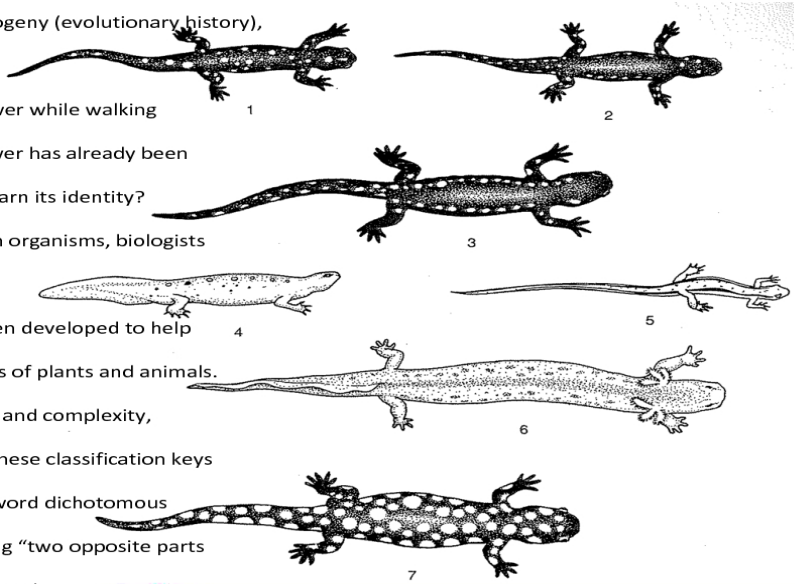
Suppose you find a large colorful wildflower while walking through the woods. Chances are the flower has already been named and classified, but how can you learn its identity?

As an aid to help others identify unknown organisms, biologists have developed classification keys.

Many classification keys have been developed to help identify wildflowers and many other kinds of plants and animals.

Although these keys may vary in purpose and complexity, they have certain features in common. These classification keys are often called dichotomous keys. The word dichotomous comes from the word dichotomy, meaning “two opposite parts

or categories.” A dichotomous classification key presents a series of choices that lead to the identification of an organism.



Abiotic factor	Effect on the ecosystem
Temperature	Seasonal changes
Availability of water	Recycles nutrients
Topography of land	Affects the climate
Salinity of water	Changes density of water

Row	Altitude
A.	Fire
B.	Temp
C.	Topog
D.	Latitu

