The Variety of Life:
Classification

Key Stage 1

Length of Session:

90 minutes: 45 min object handling session followed by 45 minute self-guided trail in the Museum.

Maximum group size:

32 children plus 4 members of staff.

Session outline

- What's the difference between a vertebrate and an invertebrate? How do we group all the animals on our planet? Use our touchable specimens to find out.
- Also, discover who Carl Linnaeus was and why his system of classification is so important for scientists (do you know how many common names there are for woodlice?!).
- Children closely observe differences and similarities between types of animals, before sorting the vertebrates into their major classes.

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National Curriculum Areas:

Science: Working scientifically; Animals including humans; Living things and their habitats.

Suggestions for pre-visit activities

- Talk about what characteristics make animals different to plants and which characteristics all animals share.
- Get children to sort some pictures of common animals into groups and discuss what criteria they have used and how their groups are different from each other.
- Discuss the children's favourite animals, why they like them and whether they think they might see them in the Museum.

Suggestions for post-visit activities

- Play animal themed 20 questions, starting with 'Are you a mammal/amphibian/bird etc.'
- Make non-fiction guide books with chapters on the major animal groups.
- Develop a wall display of the tree of life.
- Investigate the tree of life and classification on our Learning More webpages at… http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/thezone/animals/animalid/index.htm

Learning Outcomes

- Understanding that animals can be grouped according to recognisable features.
- Knowledge that there is a scientific system of classification.
- Understanding that common names are different to scientific names.
- The ability to classify previously unknown animals within major classes.
- Awareness that animals which share common features are often closely related.

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For further details and to book your visit, contact:
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