MINNESOTA ZOO
Changing how you see the world

Animal Classification Stair Activity Pre-visit Activity

MN Graduation Standards supported:
Grades 6-8

Strand IV.B.5. The student will use the characteristics of an organism to identify the kingodm to which it belongs.

Vocabulary:
Taxonomy
Classification System
Domain
Kingdom
Phylum
Class
Order
Family
Genus
Species
Binomial
Nomenclature

Introduction:

Use of taxonomy in practical settings is an important concept to master. This lesson is designed to review and reinforce instruction in Linnaeus's Classification System by filling out a grid that will enable students to identify and to appropriately classify animals at the zoo.

Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, students will:

1. List a number of organism phylum and/or classes.
2. List the distinguishing features for each phylum and/or class.
3. Give examples of animals from each phylum and/or class.

Procedure:

1. Print the classification grid and the stair grid for this lesson. The grids have already been filled in with some common phyla and/or classes to use. If desired, the teacher can modify the grids using the possible variation guidelines at the end of this procedure.
2. This activity should be used after the teacher has presented the classification system and reviewed a number of phyla and classes, Students will be instructed in phylum/class and will use the grid to summarize the traits of the phyla and/or class. They will use this as a guide during the field trip.

Links:

Basic Phyla Information
http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/help/taxaform.html

Diversity Web Site
http://members.shaw.ca/rjbiebrich4/MyWeb4/DiversityOfLife/DiversityOfLife.htm

Information on Animal Classification-
http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/index.html

Procedure Continued:

3. Break students into small groups and assign them a phylum and/or class to research. They will fill in the grid with the appropriate information.
4. After five minutes of group work, have student groups report to the class their summary for the phylum and/or class. Students will fill in a characteristic of phyla and/or class chart as students report their information. The teacher will add any information that is missing from the student reports.
5. The students then will fill in the animal stair grid for the zoo field trip and/or use the grid as designed with the labels. In anticipation for the field trip, class discussion might revolve around the various habitats the different phylum and/or classes might be found in. This will help students find animals at the zoo which would fall within the stair activity categories.
6. Possible variations would include:
   - The teacher determines the phyla/classes from the classification review list that the students will fill in and look for at the zoo.
   - Students will fill out the stair grid using a list of choices the teacher provides from the classification grid. The student try to predict what phyla/classes will most prevalently be seen at the zoo. They will then add the phyla/class labels to the bottom of the stair case before the trip.
   - Students will design the grid with the kingdom, phyla/class, etc. before the field trip based on their own predictions.
   - Students design the grid with the kingdom, phylum etc before the field trip based on what they expect to see. They could use the zoo web site to get an idea of the animal phylum and classes.