Animal Families

Approach: Team   *Level:* Year 4

Focus: Recognise common characteristics of mammals.

Revise, apply and justify a simple classification for a small sample of animals.

Resources: 3 sets of cards: SET 1— dog, horse, baby; SET 2— birds and insects (8 cards); SET 3— mouse, spider, seal, weta.

Questions/instructions

In this activity I want everyone to help and everyone to work as a member of the team.

Give students SET 1 cards. [Group 1]

Here are three cards that show a dog, a horse and a baby. Sometimes scientists group these animals together. Why do you think these animals belong together? Talk about the reasons amongst yourselves.

Allow time.

Now tell me your reasons and I will write them down on the answer sheet.

	% responses y4
identifies all as mammals	53
identifies all as warm blooded	14
weaker classification, such as all have legs	24

Leave SET 1 cards on the table. Give students SET 2 cards. [They will sort SET 2 into 2 groups: Group 2 and Group 3]

Now I am going to give you another eight cards. I want you to group these cards into two animal families. Decide together on the animals you will put in each group. When you have finished I want you to tell me what is special about each group.

Allow time.

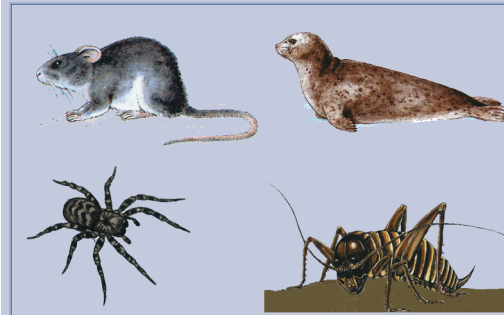Now tell me what is special about each of the groups of animals.

	% responses y4
grouped 4 insects and 4 birds	84
weaker classificaion, such as wings and no wings	11
Justification: strong	44
moderate	24
weak	24

You now have three groups on the table. I am going to give you four more cards.

Give students SET 3 cards.

I want you to decide together which group each card should go in. If you think it doesn't belong in any group just put it aside. Remember you need to think carefully about your reasons for putting the animals into groups.

Allow time.

Tell me where you have put the four cards.

Why did you put the **mouse** in that group?

correctly placed, well argued	40
correctly placed, poorly argued	39

Why did you put the **seal** in that group?

correctly placed, well argued	35
correctly placed, poorly argued	23

Why did you put the **spider** in that group?

correctly placed, well argued	19
correctly placed, poorly argued	3

Why did you put the **weta** in that group?

correctly placed, well argued	55
correctly placed, poorly argued	37

Commentary:

The year 4 student teams were quite successful in grouping or placing the creatures, but less successful in justifying their choices. The spider was often incorrectly added to the insects group.