Living things and their Habitats – What makes a difference?

Vertebrates

These are animals with backbones.

Vertebrates are divided into five groups:

1. Mammals
2. Birds
3. Fish
4. Reptiles
5. Amphibians

Some examples of vertebrates:

humans, elephants, cows, dolphins, cats, sparrows, frogs, fish and crocodiles.

Invertebrates

These are animals without backbones.

Invertebrates are divided into further groups. These include:

insects, annelids, protozoa, crustaceans, molluscs, arachnids and echinoderms.

Some examples of invertebrates:

ladybirds, squids, bees, snails, centipedes, wasps and flies.

Plants

These are divided into two groups.

Flowering plants have flowers and non-flowering plants have no flowers.

Some examples of flowering plants:
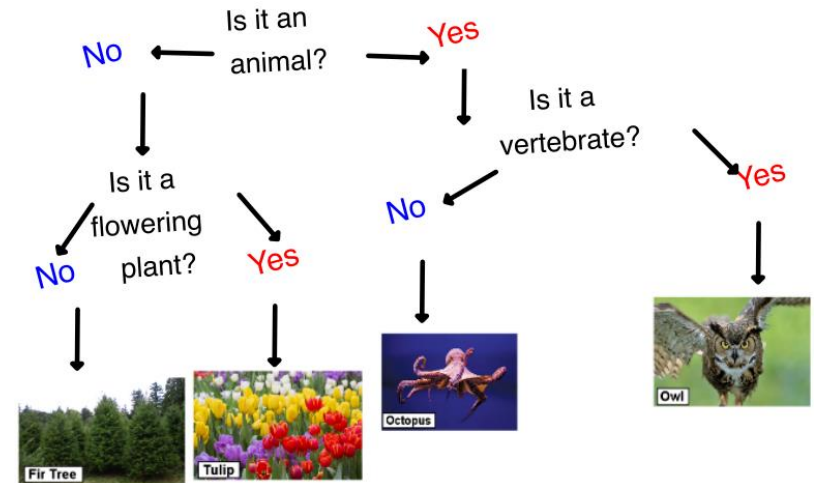apple trees, tulips, sunflowers and grasses.

Some examples of non-flowering plants:
conifers, ferns and mosses.

Classification Keys

A key is a set of questions about the characteristics of living things.
You can use a key to identify a living thing or decide which group it belongs to by answering questions.

No ← Is it an animal? → Yes

Is it a flowering plant? No → No

Yes → Yes

Is it a vertebrate? No

Yes → Yes

Fir Tree Tulip Octopus Owl

Some living things can only survive in a particular habitat. When the habitat changes these species find it difficult to survive.
Changes can be natural or caused by humans.

Changes caused by humans

Pollution.
This includes chemicals and waste on the ground, as well as in rivers and seas.

Deforestation
Half of the worlds plants and animals live in forests. Humans cut down large areas of forest to make space for building and farming.

Urbanisation
Humans build on areas of land that were once natural habitats.

Natural changes

Earthquakes
Storms
Floods
Hurricanes
Wildfires
Droughts

Key Vocabulary

Backbone	A collection of bones, connected to form the back of an animal. Also called a spine.
Characteristic	A special quality or appearance that makes an individual or a group different from others.
Classification	A category (group) that something is put into based on its features.
Classify	To group together, based on characteristics.
Deforestation	The clearing or cutting down of forests.
Drought	Where there is a shortage of rain over a long period of time.
Endangered species	Organisms that are at risk of being made extinct.
Environment	The air, water and land, in or on which, animals (including humans) or plants live.
Environmental dangers	Anything within the habitat of a living organism that may cause harm or damage to it.
Extinct	An organism is extinct when there are no living specimens left on Earth
Flowering plant	Flowering plants produce flowers, in order to reproduce.
Habitat	The place where an organism lives.
Invertebrate	An animal without a backbone.
Microhabitat	A small part of the environment that supports a habitat, such as a log. a forest.
Non-Flowering plant	Plants which do not use flowers to reproduce.
Organism	A living thing.
Pollution	When the environment is contaminated, or dirtied, by waste, chemicals, and other harmful substances.
Urbanisation	When a place becomes more urban, more people live and work there.
Vertebrate	An animal with a backbone.