

Creature Categorization

(to be used with Episode 3 of The World of Work podcast series)

Soft Skills Highlight: Organization and Critical Thinking

Growth Mindset Theme: Be a Lifelong Learner

Curriculum tie-ins: Science, creative writing, research skills

There are many popular games and puzzles circulating these days that would be perfect for teaching organization and critical thinking skills to your students, such as the New York Time's Wordle and Connections games, and good old fashioned Sudoku puzzles. Learning to classify and organize information is a cross-curricular skill that lends itself to all content areas. Here is a fun and creative way to help students practice organizing information.

Materials Needed:

- Drawing paper and coloring materials
- A list of animals (optional)
- Books or computer access to research animals (optional)

How to Use This Activity:

Students will begin this activity by designing a make-believe creature, and coming up with three "facts" about their creature. Once every student has designed their creature and given it some characteristics that make it unique, task students with organizing the creatures into different classifications by working together. Will all animals with wings be in the same group, or perhaps all animals that eat pizza? Encourage students to organize the creatures into four or five different categories that they have defined themselves. Then, have them explain why the creatures were categorized in this way.

Activity Variations:

Provide students with a list of real animals. Have students use their own knowledge, or do some research, to categorize these animals into four different groups.



Additionally, students may work independently to categorize the creatures, either make-believe or real, independently, then share their process with one another.

Activity Wrap-Up:

Depending on the activity variation used, discussions may focus on:

- The research process
- Working together to organize information
- Reflecting on their individual process in organizing information
- Why organization is important in everyday life, and how organization skills help us on our path to being a lifelong learner