

Creek Creature Clues

Use body traits to sort and identify organisms.

4.3.d "classification can be used to identify organisms."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB In paragraphs 2 and 3, underline the body or life-cycle traits used for sorting, then write amphibian, arthropod, or reptile above each animal description to show how the traits identify it.

Sorting Animals at the Creek

- ① On a creek walk, Maya found three small animals near the water. She did not identify them by color. Color can vary, and it is not a useful classifying trait in this investigation. Instead, she looked for body features, such as a backbone, skin covering, number of legs, and where each animal could live. These traits helped her sort the animals into groups.
- ② One animal had moist, smooth skin and four legs. It could live on land but needed water to lay eggs. These traits placed it in the amphibian group. Maya identified it as a salamander. Another animal had a hard outer covering, many jointed legs, and no backbone. Those traits placed it with arthropods, so Maya identified it as a crayfish.
- ③ The third animal had a backbone, dry scaly skin, and a shell. It breathed air with lungs and laid eggs on land. These traits placed it in the reptile group, and Maya identified it as a painted turtle. Classification gave Maya a useful path: observe traits first, sort the animal into a group, then use the group to identify the organism.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which traits placed the salamander in the amphibian group?

2 How did classification help Maya identify the animal with jointed legs and no backbone?

3 Name two traits that support classifying the painted turtle as a reptile.

4 What three-step path did Maya use to identify an organism?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose two animals that were not named in the passage. For each one, write its classification group and two traits that help place it in that group.

ORGANISM	CLASSIFICATION GROUP	TWO IDENTIFYING TRAITS

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In paragraphs 2 and 3, underline the body or life-cycle traits used for sorting, then write amphibian, arthropod, or reptile above each animal description to show how the traits identify it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which traits placed the salamander in the amphibian group?	It had moist, smooth skin and four legs, and it needed water to lay eggs.
2	How did classification help Maya identify the animal with jointed legs and no backbone?	Those traits placed it in the arthropod group, so Maya identified it as a crayfish.
3	Name two traits that support classifying the painted turtle as a reptile.	It had dry, scaly skin and laid eggs on land.
4	What three-step path did Maya use to identify an organism?	She observed traits, sorted the animal into a group, and used the group to identify the organism.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

ORGANISM	CLASSIFICATION GROUP	TWO IDENTIFYING TRAITS
Monarch butterfly	Arthropod	no backbone; six jointed legs
American toad	Amphibian	moist skin; lays eggs in water

Accept accurate examples of amphibians, arthropods, or reptiles that are not named in the passage. Each row should include a correct group and two traits that support that classification.