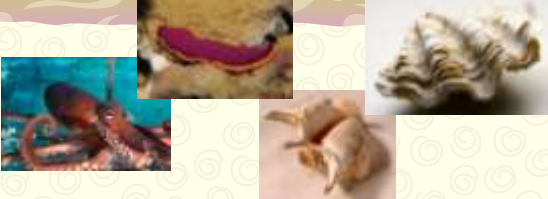# Dichotomous Keys

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What is a Dichotomous Key?

- a series of choices that lead the user to the correct scientific name of a organism
- "Dichotomous" means "divided into two parts".
  - always give two choices in each step – yes or no.

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1. The animal is covered by a shell . . . . . Go to 2
   The animal does not have a shell . . . . Go to 3
2. The animal has one shell . . . . Conch
   The animal has two shells . . . . Clam
3. The animal has tentacles . . . . Octopus
   The animal does not have tentacles . . Slug

Arthropod Key

1. A. Does the organism have 6 legs? ……….......................go to 2
   B. Does the organism have more than 6 legs?....*Narceus americanus*
2. A. Does the organism have 3 body segments? ....go to 3
   B. Does the organism not have 3 body segments? ....*Coccinella Septenpunctata*
3. A. Does the organism have enlarged hind limbs? *Dissosteria carolina*
   B. Are all limbs similar in size? ....go to 4
4. A. Does the organism have a segmented abdomen?.... *Lasius alienus*
   B. Is the abdomen unsegmented? .... *Kheper aegyptiorum*

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1. Use the picture of the shark below to help you identify the different parts.
2. Choose one of the fourteen sharks in Figure 2 and try to identify it using the dichotomous key.
3. Start at statement 1A of the key and read the statement. If the statement is true, follow the instructions at the end. If the statement is false, go on to statement 1B. If the instructions tell you to go to another statement, then read that statement and follow the directions at the end.
4. Continue to follow the statements according the directions written in the key until you find the name of the Family the shark belongs to.
5. Write the Family name on the line provided under the picture of the shark.
6. Do this for each of the fourteen sharks but remember to ALWAYS START AT THE FIRST STATEMENT!
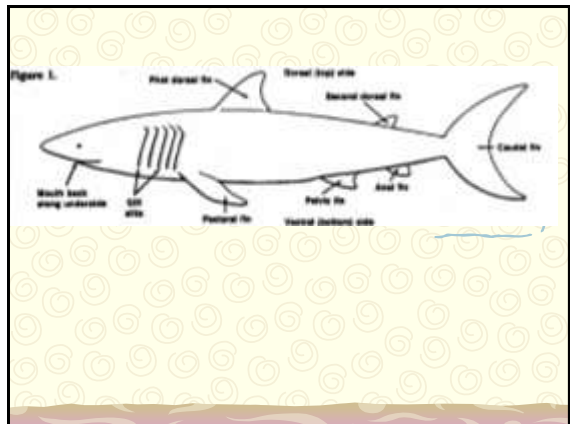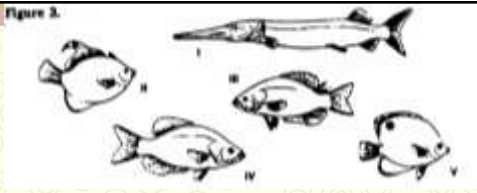   - If you start in the middle of the key or try to work backwards, you could get a wrong answer.

Figure 1.

Figure 3.

1. A. If the fish has a long, tube like body ………..…… Go to
   B. If the fish does not have a tube like body ………… Go to
2. A.
   B.
3. A.
   B
4. A.
   B.