



Prep – Fabulous Features

Teacher Guide and Unit Plan

Learning Intentions

We are learning ...

... to look closely at animals and describe what we can see to sort them.

...group animals by the features they share and name some animal groups.

...spot mammal features in real animals and compare humans with other mammals.

Success Criteria

We will be successful when...

...talk about what we notice (fur, feathers, scales, wings, fins) and sort animals by these.

... when we use clues to say features for each group and sort animals using the clues.

... we explain what group a human belongs to and why.

... we have a model of an animal and can explain the group it belongs to and the features they share.

Australian Curriculum

Learning Area Content Descriptions

Science

AC9SFU01 Students learn to observe external features of plants and animals and describe ways they can be grouped based on these features.

Science as a human endeavour

AC9SFH01 explore the ways people make and use observations and questions to learn about the natural

Science Inquiry

Questioning and Predicting AC9SFI01 pose questions and make predictions based on experiences

Planning and Conducting AC9SFI02 engage in investigations safely and make observations using their senses

Processing, modelling and Analysing AC9SFI03 represent observations in provided templates and identify patterns with guidance

Evaluating AC9SFI04 compare observations with predictions with guidance

Communicating AC9SFI05 share questions, predictions, observations and ideas with others

Cross-Curriculum Priorities Sustainability

General Capabilities Literacy, Digital Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking

Achievement standard

By the end of Foundation students groups plants and animals based on external features. They share questions, predictions, observations and ideas about their experiences with others.





Students will be successful when they can identify the following features of each animal group as listed in the table below.

Grouping	Observable Features
Mammals	Have hair or fur . Feed their babies milk . Most have live babies (monotremes, echidna and platypus, lay eggs) Have ears you can see.
Birds	Have feathers . Have wings . Have beaks . Have claws or talons . Lay eggs .
Fish	Have fins . Have gills to breathe in water. Have scales . Live in water . Lay eggs .
Reptiles	Have dry, scaly skin . Usually lay eggs . Have four legs , or no legs (like snakes).
Amphibians	Have smooth, moist skin . Live in water when they are young , then move between water and land as adults. Lay eggs in water .
Insects	A body divided into 3 parts Six legs or more. Are usually very small.





Teacher Background Information

Early biological science education focuses on helping students observe and describe the external features of living things and understand how these features help organisms survive. According to Primary Connections, animals can be grouped based on shared observable characteristics, such as body coverings, number of legs, and specialised structures used for movement, feeding or sensing the environment. This classification approach has been used scientifically since Linnaeus and remains foundational for early learners.

Animals belong to several major groups, including **mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians and insects**, each with distinct features.

Mammals typically have **hair or fur, observable ears, feed their young milk**, and most give birth to live young. Humans are classified as mammals because they have hair, are warm-blooded, give birth to live young, and feed their babies milk.

Birds possess **feathers, wings, beaks and claws**.

Fish have **fins, gills and scales** and live in water.

Reptiles can be identified by observable features such as **dry, scaly skin and typically laying eggs**, which distinguish them from other vertebrate groups.

Amphibians can be recognised by observable features such as **smooth, moist skin** and they live in water as young and **move between water and land** as adults, when they grow lungs.

These characteristics are well-established in biological science and are the basics of classification.

Australian science curriculum guidance reinforces that young students should develop the ability to identify and group living things based on their external features and understand that all living things have basic needs, such as food, water and shelter, which must be met for survival.

In Tasmania, understanding local fauna deepens this learning. The Tasmanian Government's Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE Tas) highlights that Tasmania is home to a **unique assemblage of wildlife, particularly mammals**, including the **Tasmanian devil, Eastern quoll, Spotted-tailed quoll, wombats, pademelons, platypuses**, and many endemic (naturally found in the area) bird species such as the **Swift Parrot (endemic for breeding), Green Rosella** and **Yellow Wattlebird**. Because of its island isolation and relatively intact habitats, Tasmania retains species that have become extinct or rare on mainland Australia.

These local examples help students connect observable features with real animals they may encounter during excursions or in their community. They also provide a meaningful foundation for understanding how humans can care for living things, drawing parallels between conservation practices in Tasmania and actions children can take at home and school.

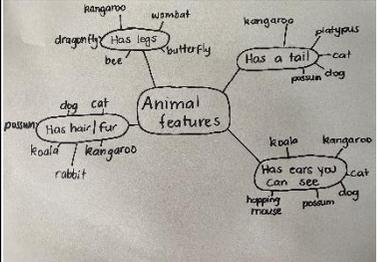




Prep – Fabulous Features – Unit Plan

	Tuning In	Modelling – I do	Guided Practice- We do	Independent Practice– You do	Plenary	Resources
Lesson 1 – Who’s Who at the Zoo?						
Learning Intention	We are learning to look closely at animals and describe what we can see to sort them.		Success Criteria		We will be successful when we talk about what we notice (e.g., fur, feathers, scales, wings, fins), sort animal photos by a visible feature.	
Sequence	<p>Quick pair share with two contrasting animal photos (e.g., bird vs kangaroo): ‘What is the same? What is different?’</p> <p>Glue photos in Science Journal and record ideas in two colours with the titles same and different.</p>	<p>Model noticing features on 2–3 photos using sentence stems ‘I see...’, ‘It has...’ and name features (fur/hair, feathers, scales, wings, fins, beaks, claws).</p> <p>Use Animal Cards to write and say what you notice. Example.</p>	<p>Hand out Animal Cards to students and have then repeat the activity with a partner.</p> <p>Focus on using the sentence stems to name features.</p>	<p>Students then glue their Animal Card in their Science book/paper and circle the features they see.</p> <p>Students attempt to write the feature name.</p>	<p>Pair/Share Students share their photo with a partner and use the sentence stems to say what features their animal has.</p>	<p>A3 Art Diary for Science Journal.</p> <p>Two colour printouts of contrasting animals for Science journal.</p> <p>Colour printout of Animal Cards for each student.</p>
Teacher Notes	Record your personal notes and adjustments here.					



	Tuning In	Modelling – I do	Guided Practice- We do	Independent Practice- You do	Plenary	Resources
Lesson 2 – How are animals grouped by their features?						
Learning Intention	We are learning to group animals by the features they share and name some animal groups.		Success Criteria		We will be successful when we use clues to say features for each group and sort animals using the clues.	
Sequence	<p>Introduce the term, features as parts that you can see. Show students photos of the animals asking, what features can you see? Students should use the sentences starters, <i>I see</i> and <i>It has</i>, to share ideas with a friend.</p> <p>Ideas Map Discuss the following question in a circle: What are common animals features?</p> <p>Record in Science Journal. Example:</p> 	<p>Spread out Animal Cards in the middle of the circle. Group some animals together and use the sentence stem from last lesson to explain your reason, eg, I see wings.</p>	<p>Have students work together to group them. At the end, ask them if they can name any groups.</p> <p>Write these on paper and put them next to each group with the reason why using the stems, we see.</p> <p>Introduce students to the picture book, <i>Don't Trust Fish</i>.</p> <p>Explain that we are looking for the names of the groups of animals.</p> <p>Stop as you read to check the names students have given the groups, the</p>	<p>Students to complete the task, Animal Groups, to draw an animal that belongs to each group.</p> <p>Refer to sorting activity to support students.</p>	<p>Gallery Walk Students to lay out their Animal Groups Task and walk around to view each other's.</p>	<p>Animal Cards – Class Set for sorting</p> <p>Animal Groups Task-class set</p> <p>Animal Groups Poster</p> 

			features and correct where necessary.			
Teacher Notes	Record your personal notes and adjustments here.					

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Record your personal notes and adjustments here.



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EXCURSION TIME

Share the social story with your class and preparing them for their excursion to Hobart Zoo and Aquarium where they will learn about the life cycle of monotremes

	Tuning In	Modelling – I do	Guided Practice- We do	Independent Practice- You do	Plenary	Resources
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Lesson 3 – Which group do humans belong to?

Learning Intention	We are learning to compare humans with other animals and name their features.	Success Criteria	We will be successful when we explain what group a human belongs to and why.
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Sequence	<i>Think, Pair, Share</i> What was your favourite at animal at the zoo? Why?	What features do humans have? Use the animal groups poster to	Use the Animal Cards to sort the animals using the following questions:	Humans are mammals and share the same features, students draw and write create	Share definitions with a partner.	Animal Cards – Class Set for sorting
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	<p>What animal group do you think humans belong to? Why?</p> <p>Discuss and record ideas in Science Journal.</p>	<p>classify humans as a mammal and clarify features using an anchor chart.</p>	<p>What animals did we see at the Hobart Zoo and Aquarium that we think are mammals? Once sorted, use the anchor chart to check if they are mammals.</p>	<p>a definition in their Science books.</p>		<p>Animal Groups Task-class set</p> <p>Animal Groups Poster</p>
Teacher Notes	Record your personal notes and adjustments here.					
	Tuning In	Modelling – I do	Guided Practice- We do	Independent Practice- You do	Plenary	Resources
Lesson 4 – What was your favourite animal at the zoo?						
Learning Intention	We are learning to group animals and describe their features.		Success Criteria		We will be successful when we have an animal model and can explain the group it belongs to and the features they share.	
Sequence	<p>Think/Pair/Share</p> <p>What was your favourite animal at the zoo? Why?</p>	<p>Make a model/draw your favourite animal.</p> <p>Explain it's key features and what animal group it belongs to.</p>	<p>Students then make a model/draw their favourite animal.</p> <p>Record (by videoing/scribing) students explaining the key features and</p>	<p>Share your model with a friend and explain what animal group it belongs to and how you know this.</p>	<p>Animal Cards to support students in remembering what animals are at the Hobart Zoo</p>	





			what animal the group belongs to. Have them justify how they know that.		and Aquarium. Poster of Animal Groups and Features.
Teacher Notes	Record your personal notes and adjustments here.				

Adjustments

The following adjustments are differentiated to support and engage all students.





Resources

Don't Trust Fish, read aloud by author Neil Sharpson. - [DON'T TRUST FISH - Read Aloud with the Author | Brightly Storytime - YouTube](#)

	Enabling	Extending
Content	Reduce number of features/groups at once; tactile prompts (fake fur/feather/scale cards); use visuals/icons for each feature and group.	Add nuanced groups (amphibians, monotremes); link basic habitat–feature ideas; compare two similar animals and justify classification.
Process	Pre-teach vocabulary with realia/gestures; guided groups with sentence starters; repeated think-aloud modelling.	Independent or small-group sorting with student-generated rules; labelled scientific diagrams; prompt questioning and justification.
Product	Offer drawing/matching/trace options/cut and paste; stamp/checkbox features; allow oral explanations recorded by an adult through scribing or videoing.	Expect simple explanatory sentences ('This is a mammal because...'); create mini-posters; present to class or record short audio/video.

Our Animals – Short videos about Australian Mammals and Marsupials. [Our Animals - ABC Education](#)

Animals including Humans - [Animals including humans - KSI Science - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Finding features | Primary Connections- https://primaryconnections.org.au/teaching-sequences/foundation/finding-features](#)

References

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