

Classification Clarification

Scientists have found and described approximately 1.75 million species on Earth. New species are being discovered every day. Part of our mission is to discover some of these species in the waters of the world. With such a diversity of life on Earth, how does one make sense of it all?

One way to make sense of it is by classification. Scientists put similar species into groups so that those millions of species do not seem so overwhelming. People rely on the scientist's knowledge of classification to understand what different species are similar. Living things are first divided into three groups based on their genetic similarity. These groups are title domains and the three domains are: Archaea (very primitive forms of bacteria); Eubacteria (More advanced forms of bacteria) and Eukaryota (All life forms with eukaryotic cells including plants and animals). Living things are further divided into Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus and Species.

The divers at the Association for Marine Exploration have a tough time keeping these names straight, so we use mnemonics. Mnemonics are sayings that help us keep straight the classification schemes. Below we show you the classification and one of our silly mnemonics. To the right, we have given you two lines to make your own mnemonic. Remember, the more silly the mnemonic, the easier it will be to remember.



| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-------|-------|
| Domain | Dirty | _____ | _____ |
| Kingdom | King | _____ | _____ |
| Phylum | Phillip | _____ | _____ |
| Class | Came | _____ | _____ |
| Order | Over | _____ | _____ |
| Family | For | _____ | _____ |
| Genus | Good | _____ | _____ |
| Species | Spaghetti | _____ | _____ |

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