

KS2 – Habitat: Create a Branching Key

We use **branching keys** to help us identify the different plants and animals. They are called “keys” because they ‘unlock’ the ‘door’ to knowing what something is.

Game:

Choose a plant or animal from the photo pack but don’t tell your classmates which one it is as they have to guess by only asking questions that you can answer ‘YES’ or ‘NO’ to. Can they guess in less than 20 questions?

Try to ask detective questions like “Does it swim?” “Has it got feathers?” “Does it move?” “Is it bigger than my hand?” etc.

Keys are used by asking and answering “**YES/NO Questions**”.

To use a key to identify creatures we need to be really good at these YES/NO questions.

Activity:

It is time to use those YES/NO questions to create your own branching key so that you can identify different plants and animals as you watch the Living Uplands video footage.

- Study the photo pack and work out which species are likely to be found living amongst the curlew. Choose about 6 photos of species you would like on your key and cut them out.
- Now divide them into 2 groups using a YES/NO question. It might be helpful to write your question on a big piece of paper with 2 arrows underneath one arrow is a YES arrow and one arrow is a NO arrow. Write or draw the species under each of the arrows where they belong.
- Now look at the species under the YES arrow and think of another Yes/No question to divide them into 2 groups. Again draw 2 arrows (one for YES and one for NO under your question and arrange your species under the right arrow. Keep going until you have only one species at the bottom of an arrow.

Have a look at the example of a pond branching key to give you an idea of how your finished key will look. Remember your key will have species that you might see when watching the Living Uplands video footage.