Vertebrates and Invertebrates

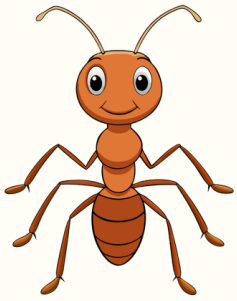
Grade 3

Name _____ Date _____

Remember: Vertebrates have a **backbone** (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals). **Invertebrates** have **no backbone** (insects, spiders, worms, snails).

Feel your back: those bumps are your backbone, so you are a vertebrate!

Classifying Animals



There are millions of kinds of animals on Earth. To study them, scientists sort, or **classify**, animals into groups based on their features.

One of the biggest ways to classify animals is by whether they have a **backbone**. Run your fingers down the middle of your back. Those bumps are your backbone, a row of small bones called vertebrae.

Animals with a backbone are called **vertebrates**. Fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals are all vertebrates. You are a vertebrate too!

Animals without a backbone are called **invertebrates**. Insects, spiders, worms, snails, jellyfish and octopuses are invertebrates. Some, like beetles and crabs, have a hard outer shell to protect their bodies. Most of the animals on Earth are invertebrates.

1. Check your understanding

Circle the best answer.

1. What does classify mean?

(a) To sort into groups (b) To feed animals (c) To count animals

2. What is a vertebrate?

(a) An animal with a shell (b) An animal with a backbone (c) An animal that flies

3. Which animal is an invertebrate?

(a) A frog (b) A dog (c) A spider

4. Are there more vertebrates or invertebrates on Earth?

(a) Vertebrates (b) They are equal. (c) Invertebrates

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2. Backbone or not?

Circle vertebrate or invertebrate.

1	eagle	vertebrate	invertebrate
2	earthworm	vertebrate	invertebrate
3	salmon	vertebrate	invertebrate
4	butterfly	vertebrate	invertebrate
5	snake	vertebrate	invertebrate
6	jellyfish	vertebrate	invertebrate

3. Think like a scientist

Answer in a complete sentence.

1. **A crab has a hard shell. Does that mean it has a backbone? Explain.**

Answer Key

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1. Check your understanding

1. What does classify mean?

a **To sort into groups** b To feed animals c To count animals

2. What is a vertebrate?

a An animal with a shell **b** **An animal with a backbone** c An animal that flies

3. Which animal is an invertebrate?

a A frog b A dog **c** **A spider**

4. Are there more vertebrates or invertebrates on Earth?

a Vertebrates b They are equal. **c** **Invertebrates**

2. Backbone or not?

1	eagle	vertebrate	invertebrate
2	earthworm	vertebrate	invertebrate
3	salmon	vertebrate	invertebrate
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5	snake	vertebrate	invertebrate
6	jellyfish	vertebrate	invertebrate

3. Think like a scientist

Sample answer.

1. **A crab has a hard shell. Does that mean it has a backbone? Explain.**
   No. A crab's hard shell is on the outside of its body. It has no backbone, so it is an invertebrate.