

GROUP
ACTIVITY




C

Sort it out

Youth sort pictures of butterflies into categories they determine.

“Sort it out” puts youth in the role of butterfly scientists, called lepidopterists, who study butterflies and moths (lep-i-dop-ter-ists). The goal is to group butterflies by distinguishing characteristics. Remember, there are no wrong answers if youth can justify their categories.

Directions

1. Divide the group into teams of two to five youth. Each team appoints a leader and a spokesperson. The team leader is in charge of the discussion, making sure everyone contributes, and comes to a consensus. The spokesperson explains the team’s findings to the other groups at the end of the activity.
2. The role of the team leader is to:
 -  Make sure the team members work together, rather than direct the team.
 -  Ask each person his or her opinion and work to gain overall agreement.
 -  Ensure everyone contributes to the decision-making process.
3. Give each team one set of butterfly pictures, and a copy of the team leader directions. You may choose to walk around the room to ensure each team performs as a team. Try not to give suggestions on the sorting unless the youth struggle with the activity.
4. When they are finished, each team’s spokesperson explains the classification system their team developed. The report should include how the team made decisions.

Directions for the team leader

1. Ask the team to discuss similarities and differences among the butterflies.
2. Discuss these and other features that can be used to sort them.
3. Guide your team toward agreement on the characteristics to be used to create the categories. What are the characteristics of each category?
4. Have the team look at the characteristics shown in each picture and then put it into the appropriate group. Each picture should be placed into only one group.
5. Can the team sort the cards in more than one way? Which other characteristics can be used to sort the pictures?

**Science Connection
Comparing**—Scientists

see how things are alike and different by comparing their characteristics.

Life Skill

Positive relationship skills with others

Materials for each team

30 unlabeled pictures of butterflies (You can print photos of butterflies from the WINGS web site. Create several “butterfly ID sheets” and then cut the pictures into individual cards.)
one copy of the Directions for the team leader

Reflect and Connect

Questions to discuss with your 4-H youth:

How'd it go?

- ✈ Did the teams classify the butterflies in the same way?
- ✈ If some of the team members could not agree, how did they reach a decision? Did the leader fulfill the leadership role?
- ✈ Did everyone contribute?

Go Back

- ✈ What was most difficult about making decisions in a group?

Go Bigger

- ✈ Why is it important to know how to work on a team?
- ✈ What additional information might influence or change the classification categories?

Go Beyond

- ✈ Why do scientists classify living things?
- ✈ What other times are decisions made as a team?

Extension Extras

Scavenger Sort It Out

Give each team a bag and tell them they have 15 minutes to go outside and collect 30 objects that will fit in the bag. Once everyone has returned, ask teams to trade bags and repeat the sorting activity with the items found in their new bag. Suggest that each team select a new leader and spokesperson. Once the activity concludes, be sure to replace all items where they were found.

Hint: Don't tell the teams in advance that they will trade bags with the other team.