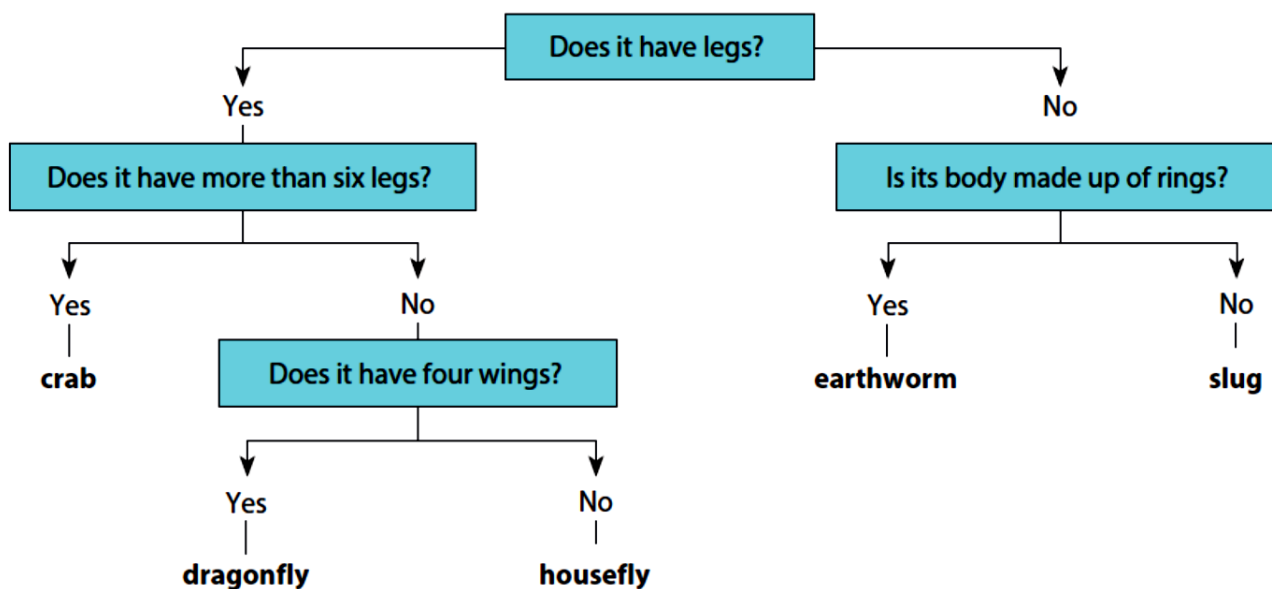
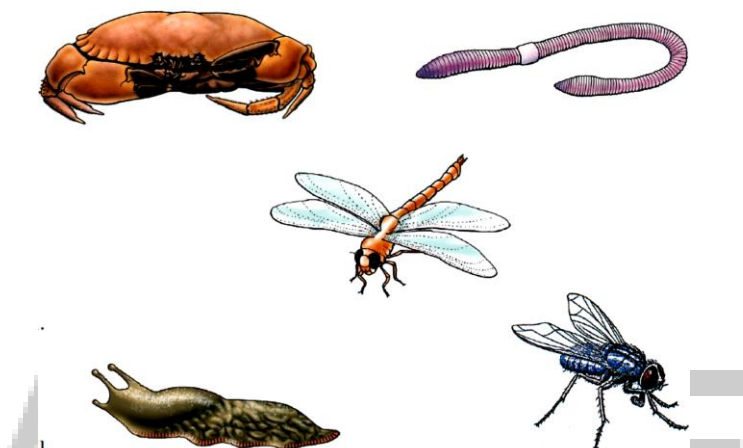


4.4 Using keys

- Biologists use keys to help them to identify organisms.
- A key is a set of questions about the organism you want to identify. The answer to each question takes you to another question. You work through all of the questions until you arrive at the name of the organism.
- Here is a simple key to help someone identify an organism. It is a dichotomous key. Dichotomous means 'branching into two'.



Keys are sometimes arranged differently. Here is the same key set out in a different way. Instead of a question, the key starts with a pair of statements to choose from.

- 1 **a** It has legs. _____ → go to 2
- b** It does not have legs. _____ → go to 3
- 2 **a** It has exactly six legs. _____ → go to 4
- b** It has more than six legs. _____ → **crab**
- 3 **a** Its body is made up of rings. _____ → **earthworm**
- b** Its body is not made up of rings. _____ → **slug**
- 4 **a** It has four wings. _____ → **dragonfly**
- b** It has two wings. _____ → **housefly**

4.5 Constructing keys

Step 1

Think of a way you can split the learners into two groups. For example, you could split them into male and female learners. So, your first question could be: Is the learner female?

Step 2

Now look at just one of these groups – the female learners, for example. Think of a way to split these into two. For example, you could use the colour of their hair.

Step 3

Repeat Step 2 until you have thought of ways to identify each learner in turn.

