**Introduction to Dichotomous Key**

Objectives:

* To be able for the students to know how to use the dichotomous key.
* To be able for the students to know how to classify and sort the objects/specimens based on their given characteristics.

Introduction/Discussion:

What is a Dichotomous Key?

A **dichotomous key** is a tool that allows the user to determine the identity of items in the natural world, such as trees, wildflowers, mammals, reptiles, rocks, and fish. **Keys** consist of a series of choices that lead the user to the correct name of a given item. "**Dichotomous**" means "divided into two parts".

What are the uses of Dichotomous Keys?

* Dichotomous keys are used to classify newly discovered organisms. They have something to do with the 'kingdom, phylum, genus, species' thing. The organisms are classified by what characteristics they have, by deciding what other organisms the newly discovered organism is like and unlike.
* It is then put into a category (like cats), further broken down, like house cats, wild cats, so on, then given a name like Manx or tiger or bobcat. they can use this to track evolution in organisms, like if a new fossil is found, and it has a certain shaped skull that looks familiar or has a similar characteristic to an already classified organism then they can put it in a common category. It’s simple, yet complex.
* The dichotomous key is the method employed for identifying unknown organisms. The evolution of keys has been the result of work by taxonomists who study the characteristics of organisms at some taxonomic level (= category) and often develop keys for their identification.

How to use a Dichotomous Key:

* Begin by observing the whole specimen you want to identify. In this example, we will use a coin. Make notes about its color shades, its size, and its overall shape (edges and diameter).
* Then look for distinguishing features. These are different for each type of coin, but be sure to make notes on such features.
* The key immediately gives you two alternatives. Read both, decide which description best fits your evidence, and move on to the next set of two alternatives given in the key.

ACTVITY 1

Instructions: Identify the following objects by using the dichotomous key. Follow the directions given after every taking a note of its first given characteristic until you identify the name of the object.





Activity 2

Instructions: Group yourselves into 3 and try to make a dichotomous key out of the given specimens below.

