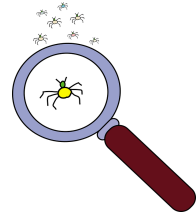


Vertebrate or Invertebrate?



All living organisms on the planet are divided into categories based on their similarities. Two main categories animals are separated into are vertebrates and invertebrates. A **vertebrate** is an animal that has a backbone and an internal (inside) skeleton. An **invertebrate** is an animal without a backbone and no internal skeleton, however some have a skeleton on the outside of their bodies, called an exoskeleton, or have shells for protection. Most animals on the planet are invertebrates! It may seem like we have more vertebrates because they are larger and we can see them (like bears, tigers, dolphins, and sea lions), but invertebrates are all around us every day! Most of them are much smaller and we do not always see them. Invertebrates have amazing adaptations, or characteristics, that help them survive in their specific habitats. Some are terrestrial (live on land) while others can live in fresh or saltwater.

Observation Activity:

Directions-

- With your parents permission, go outside and choose an area to observe (i.e. backyard, front yard, patio, etc...)
- Write down 10 animals you find during your observations
- Categorize the animals in the table provided on the next page:
 - Name of animal
 - Vertebrate or Invertebrate
 - Describe the habitat you observed it in
 - 3 adaptations

After you have completed the table, choose one invertebrate and vertebrate, compare and contrast these organisms by answering the following questions:

- 1) How were their behaviors similar or different (i.e. walking, hiding, flying)?
- 2) Compare/contrast their habitats (how are they similar or different?)
- 3) What specific adaptations help them survive in their habitats?

