

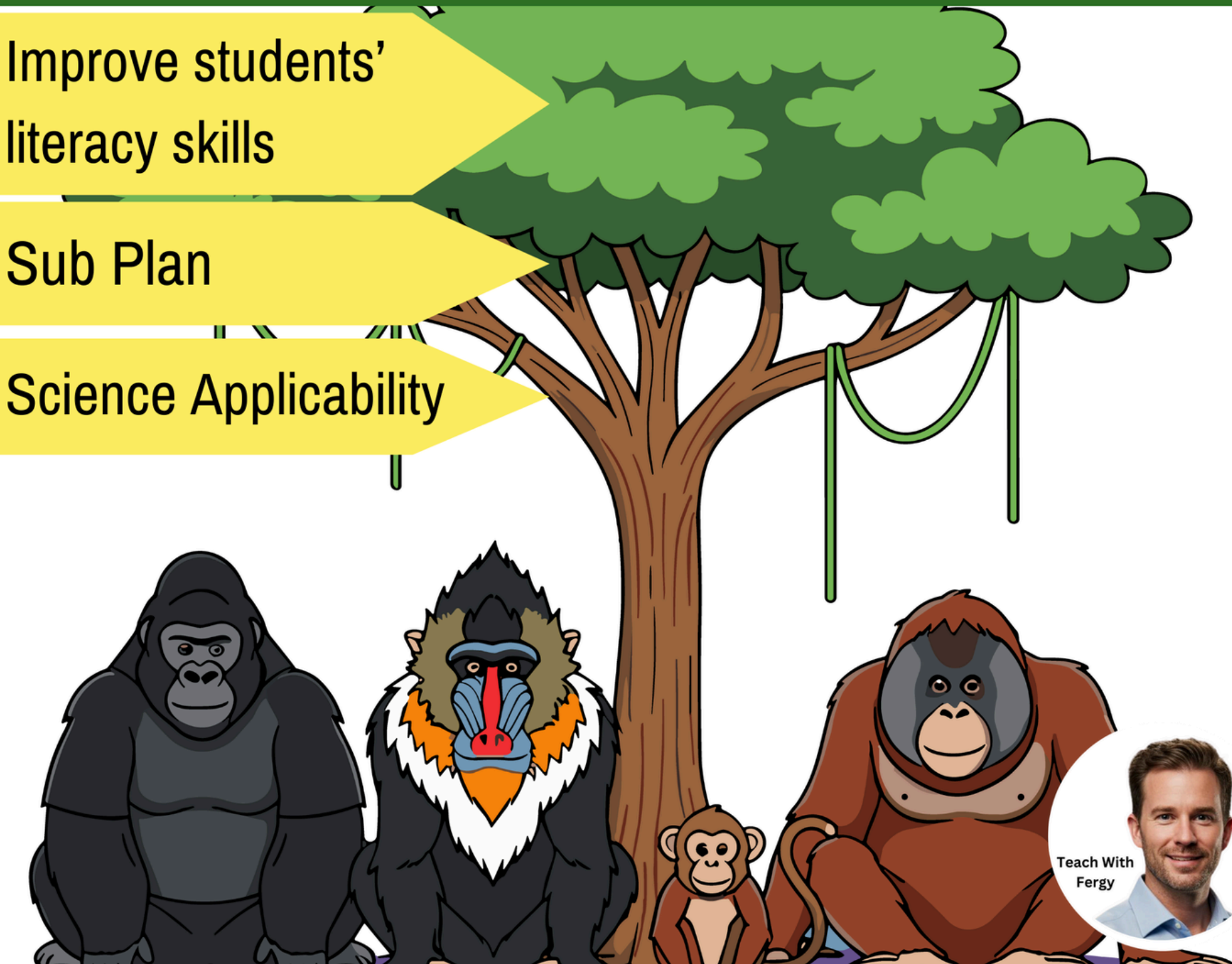
TAXONOMY AND CLASSIFICATION OF LIVING THINGS

6TH, 7TH, 8TH GRADE READING

Improve students'
literacy skills

Sub Plan

Science Applicability



Reading Comment



★★★★★ Extremely satisfied - Great resource to work on student reading comprehension and it tied into the topic I was teaching. My students have been struggling with reading and I've been incorporating more reading into my lessons. Thank you for the resource.



SCROLL
to take a look inside!

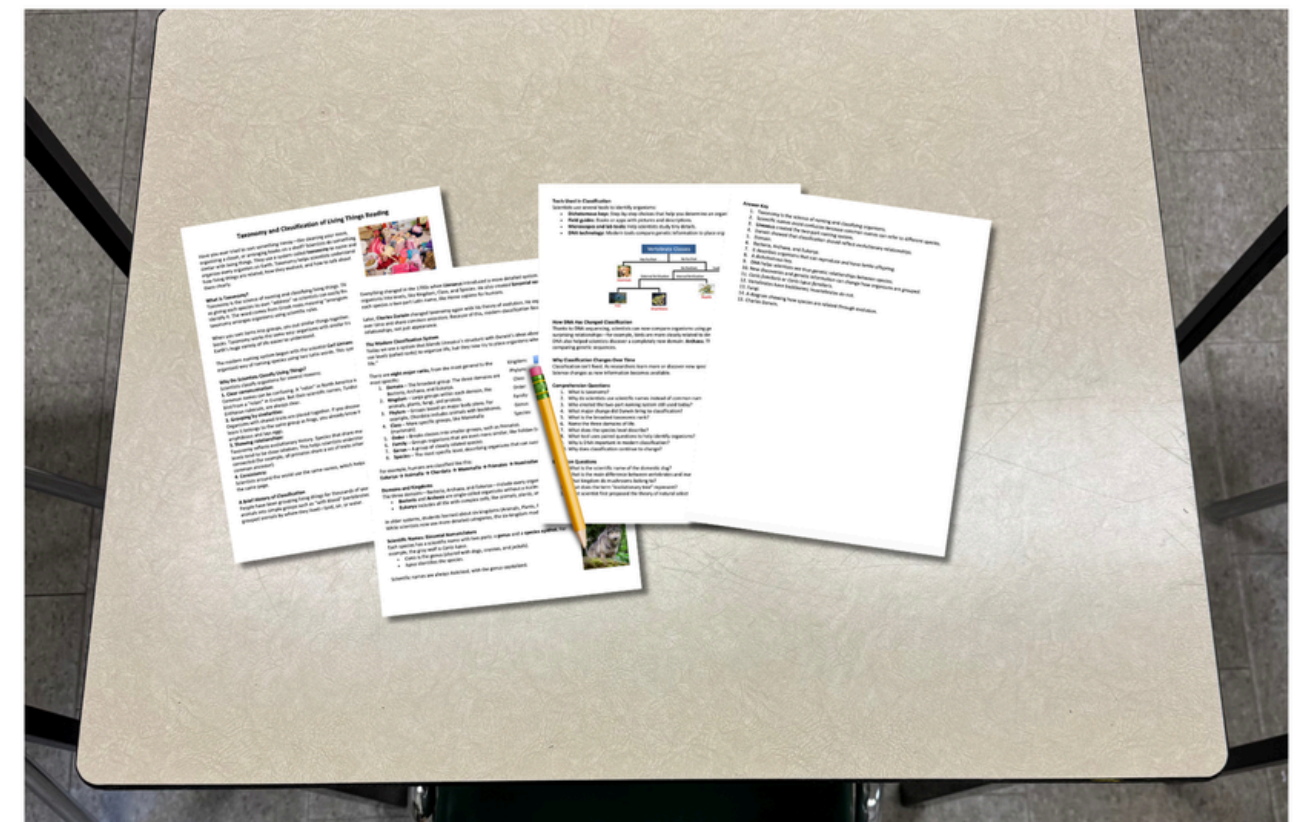


THE PROBLEMS YOU FACE

- Limited time to teach scientific literacy and strengthen students' reading and analysis skills.
- Need meaningful extension activities to engage fast-moving learners.
- Difficulty creating effective last-minute sub plans that still support student learning.

NO-PREP - PRINT/UPLOAD

- Questions and Answer Key
- **No Prep, Ready-to-Use:** Print or assign digitally with Google Docs, Microsoft Word, and PDF formats for flexible classroom use
- **Includes Varied Question Types:** Knowledge, thinking, connecting, application, and open-ended questions.



What Will Your Students Learn?

READING COMPREHENSION ARTICLE & QUESTIONS

- What Is Taxonomy?
- Why Do Scientists Classify Living Things?
- A Brief History of Classification
- The Modern Classification System
- Domains and Kingdoms
- Scientific Names: Binomial Nomenclature
- Dichotomous keys, Field guides, Microscopes, and DNA technology
- Why Classification Changes Over Time

Comprehension Questions

1. What is taxonomy?
2. Why do scientists use scientific names instead of common names?
3. Who created the two-part naming system still used today?
4. What major group of animals did Darwin bring to classification?
5. What is a taxon?
6. Name the three domains of life.
7. What is a kingdom?
8. What is a phylum?
9. Why is taxonomy important?
10. Why do scientists use scientific names?

Extension Questions

11. What is a taxon?
12. What is a taxon?
13. What is a taxon?
14. What is a taxon?
15. What is a taxon?

Taxonomy and Classification of Living Things Reading

Have you ever tried to sort something messy—like cleaning your room, organizing a closet, or arranging books on a shelf? Scientists do something similar with living things. They use a system called **taxonomy** to name and organize every organism on Earth. Taxonomy helps scientists understand how living things are related, how they evolved, and how to talk about them clearly.



What Is Taxonomy?

Taxonomy is the science of naming and classifying living things. Think of it as giving each species its own "address" so scientists can easily find and identify it. The word comes from Greek roots meaning "arrangement" and "law," which makes sense because taxonomy arranges organisms using scientific rules.

When you sort items into groups, you put similar things together. For example, socks with socks, books with books. Taxonomy works the same way: organisms with similar traits belong in the same groups. This makes Earth's huge variety of life easier to understand.

The modern naming system began with the scientist **Carl Linnaeus** in the 1700s. He created a simple, organized way of naming species using two Latin words. This system is still used today.

Why Do Scientists Classify Living Things?

Scientists classify organisms for several reasons:

1. **Clear communication:** Common names can be confusing. A "robin" in North America is a totally different bird from a "robin" in Europe. But their scientific names, *Turdus migratorius* and *Erithacus rubecula*, are always clear.



2. **Grouping by similarities:** Organisms with shared traits are placed together. If you discover a new animal and learn it belongs to the same group as frogs, you already know it is probably amphibious and lays eggs.

3. Showing relationships:

Taxonomy reflects evolutionary history. Species that share many taxonomic levels tend to be close relatives. This helps scientists understand how life is connected (for example, all primates share a set of traits inherited from a common ancestor).

4. **Consistency:** Scientists around the world use the same names, which helps everyone stay on the same page.



A Brief History of Classification

People have been classifying living things for thousands of years. Early scientists grouped animals based on simple characteristics like "with blood" or "without blood."

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Article with
Comprehension
Questions

6th, 7th, 8th Grade

Print & Digital



Your Reading

Taxonomy and Classification of Living Things

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4. Consistency:

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A Brief History of Classification

People have been grouping living things for thousands of years. One early scientist grouped animals into simple groups such as “with blood” (vertebrates) and “without blood” (invertebrates). Later, scientists grouped animals by where they lived—land, air, or water.

Everything changed in the 1700s when **Linnaeus** introduced a more detailed system. He divided organisms into levels, like Kingdom, Class, and Species. He also created **binomial nomenclature**, which gives each species a two-part Latin name, like *Homo sapiens* for humans.

Later, **Charles Darwin** changed taxonomy again with his theory of evolution. He explained how species change over time and share common ancestors. Because of this, modern classification focuses on evolutionary relationships, not just appearance.

The Modern Classification System

Today we use a system that blends Linnaeus’s structure with Darwin’s ideas about evolution. We use levels (called ranks) to organize life, but they now try to place organisms where they fit in the “tree of life.”

There are **eight major ranks**, from the most general to the most specific:

- Domain** – The broadest group. The three domains are Bacteria, Archaea, and Eukarya.
- Kingdom** – Large groups within each domain, like animals, plants, fungi, and protists.
- Phylum** – Groups based on major body plans. For example, Chordata includes animals with backbones.
- Class** – More specific groups, like Mammalia (mammals).
- Order** – Breaks classes into smaller groups, such as Primates.
- Family** – Groups organisms that are even more similar, like Felidae (cats).
- Genus** – A group of closely related species.
- Species** – The most specific level, describing organisms that can successfully reproduce.

For example, humans are classified like this:

Eukarya → Animalia → Chordata → Mammalia → Primates → Hominidae → Homo → sapiens

Domains and Kingdoms

The three domains—Bacteria, Archaea, and Eukarya—include every organism on Earth.

- Bacteria** and **Archaea** are single-celled organisms without a nucleus.
- Eukarya** includes all life with complex cells, like animals, plants, and fungi.

In older systems, students learned about six kingdoms (Animals, Plants, Fungi, Protists, Archaea, and Bacteria). While scientists now use more detailed categories, the six-kingdom model is still common in some classrooms.

Scientific Names: Binomial Nomenclature

Each species has a scientific name with two parts: a **genus** and a **species epithet**. For example, the gray wolf is *Canis lupus*.

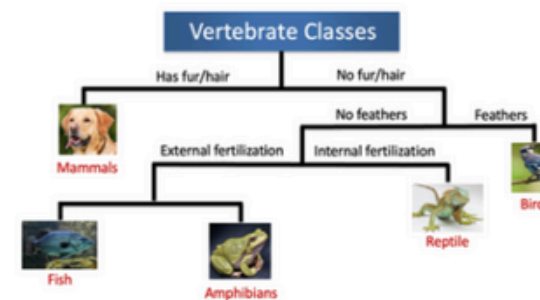
- Canis* is the genus (shared with dogs, coyotes, and jackals).
- lupus* identifies the species.

Scientific names are always italicized, with the genus capitalized.

Tools Used in Classification

Scientists use several tools to identify organisms:

- Dichotomous keys:** Step-by-step choices that help you determine an organism’s identity.
- Field guides:** Books or apps with pictures and descriptions.
- Microscopes and lab tools:** Help scientists study tiny details.
- DNA technology:** Modern tools compare genetic information to place organisms accurately.



How DNA Has Changed Classification

Thanks to DNA sequencing, scientists can now compare organisms using genetic evidence. DNA has revealed surprising relationships—for example, birds are more closely related to dinosaurs than reptiles are. DNA also helped scientists discover a completely new domain: **Archaea**. This major discovery came from comparing genetic sequences.

Why Classification Changes Over Time

Classification isn’t fixed. As researchers learn more or discover new species, they may reorganize groups. Science changes as new information becomes available.

Comprehension Questions

- What is taxonomy?
- Why do scientists use scientific names instead of common names?
- Who created the two-part naming system still used today?
- What major change did Darwin bring to classification?
- What is the broadest taxonomic rank?
- Name the three domains of life.
- What does the species level describe?
- What tool uses paired questions to help identify organisms?
- Why is DNA important in modern classification?
- Why does classification continue to change?

Extension Questions

- What is the scientific name of the domestic dog?
- What is the main difference between vertebrates and invertebrates?
- What kingdom do mushrooms belong to?
- What does the term “evolutionary tree” represent?
- What scientist first proposed the theory of natural selection?

Answer Key

- Taxonomy is the science of naming and classifying organisms.
- Scientific names avoid confusion because common names can refer to different species.
- Linnaeus** created the two-part naming system.
- Darwin showed that classification should reflect evolutionary relationships.
- Domain.
- Bacteria, Archaea, and Eukarya.
- It describes organisms that can reproduce and have fertile offspring.
- A dichotomous key.
- DNA helps scientists see true genetic relationships between species.
- New discoveries and genetic information can change how organisms are grouped.
- Canis familiaris* or *Canis lupus familiaris*.
- Vertebrates have backbones; invertebrates do not.
- Fungi.
- A diagram showing how species are related through evolution.
- Charles Darwin.

Answer Key Included

Office, Google, and PDF Versions

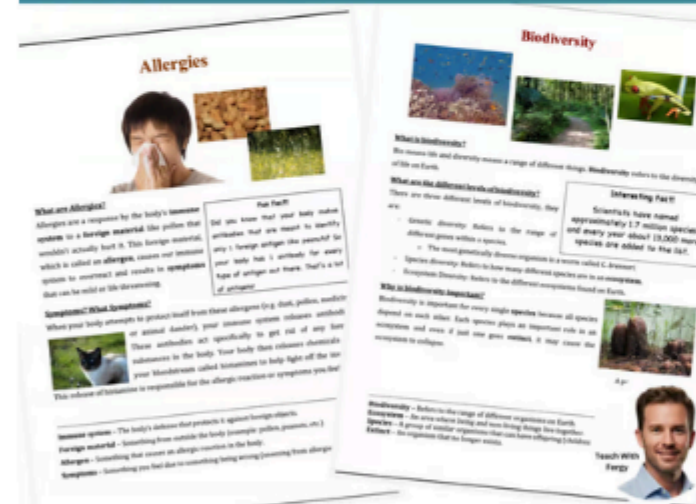


Comprehension and Extension Questions

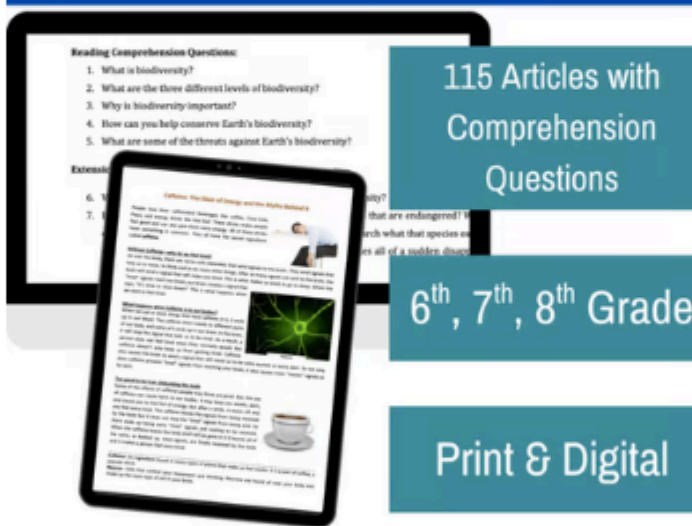
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READING COMPREHENSION ARTICLE & QUESTION MEGA BUNDLE



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Comprehension
Questions

6th, 7th, 8th Grade

Print & Digital



★★★★★ Extremely satisfied - So many comprehensive readings for all science fields. PDF and DOCX versions included so they can be edited if needed. Each one includes short answer questions at the end, the first set are easy to find the answers to in the readings, the second set require a bit more critical thinking. Includes an answer key. Great to use to fill in time or for sub plans.

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