

Investigate Using a Dichotomous Key

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Part 1: Using a Dichotomous Key for Insects

1. Go outside and find an insect (a bug with six legs and a segmented body). Gently trap the insect in a jar or other sealable container. **Be sure to wear gloves and use the safety precautions for handling live animals.** *Do not trap a bug with more than six legs or one that looks like a worm.* If you prefer, take several photos of the insect from different angles instead of trapping it.
2. Attach the best photo of your insect, or make a careful sketch of it, in the space provided under Data for Part 1. Below the picture, write a few sentences that describe the insect in detail.
3. Click link #1 on the lab landing page to go to the website of the Insect Identification Key. On the page that appears, you will find a question about your insect. Read the tips above and below the question before you start using the key.
4. Find the **Click one of the following:** heading, and reading the two possible answers to the question (Yes,... and No,...) that follow. Decide which answer describes your insect, and start a list showing which answer you chose (e.g. Question 1: Yes) under Data for Part 1. Click on the correct answer for your insect. This will take you to a new page with a new question.
5. Continue selecting the answer to the question on each new page until you reach a page that has no question. This page will show a picture of your insect, name the order it belongs to, and give its common name. The common name follows the order to which your insect belongs.
6. Record the name of the order your insect belongs to and its common name in the place provided under Data for Part 1. Then complete the list of answers you chose as you went through the key. Also list the characteristics that placed the insect in the order you identified.

