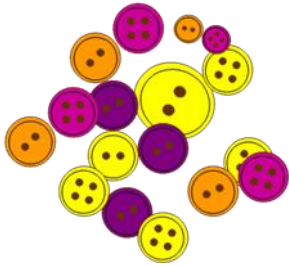


Bag of Buttons - Classification



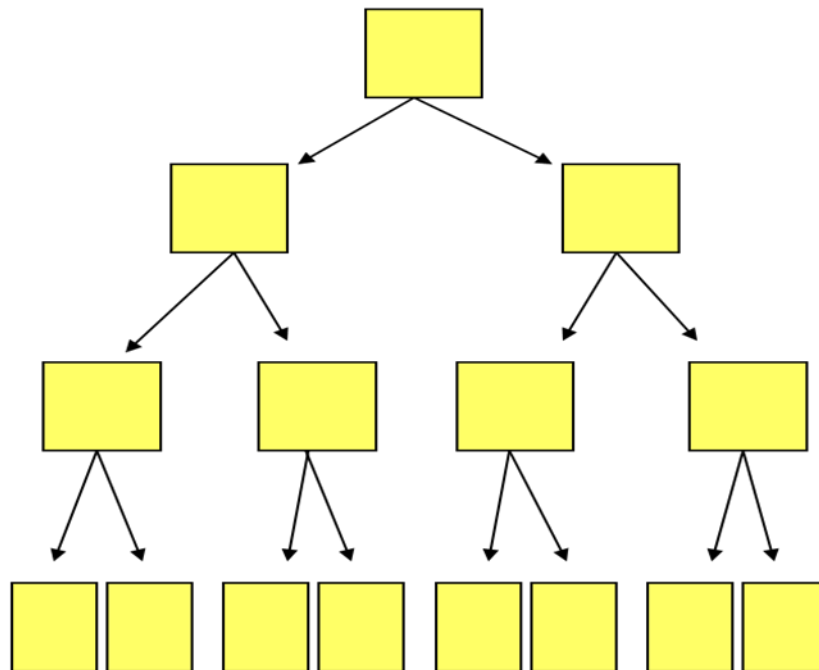
Materials:

- The children's shoes - one from each child, placed in a pile in the middle of the group
- Chart paper to list group observations about shoes
- A bag of assorted buttons for each small working group of students

"Sometimes we need to put things into groups so we can study them and better understand them. Scientists do this. They group things into living and non-living. Then they look at the living things and say plant or animal. Then they classify the animal kingdom into two groups - with or without a backbone (vertebrate or invertebrate). All vertebrate are in the same phylum - Chordata. The invertebrates belong to several phyla. Members of a particular phylum are further subdivided in a series of steps by class, order, family, genus, and species. They continue this process until they are down to a special kind of fish or bird or toad.

"Today we are going to do the same activity as the scientists. Look at your shoes. Look at your neighbor's shoes. Together we will make a list of observable characteristics for shoes. (*Make a list on chart paper of all the characteristics the children observe about shoes.*) Next, we will divide the shoes into two groups based on one observation - do they have laces or not. We will repeat this process of dividing each group into two groups using one observable characteristic until each shoe has its own group. Then we can create a diagram to illustrate our classification system."

Working in small groups have the children look through a bag of buttons. Each group should divide the buttons into two groups using one observable characteristic. Have them continue the process until they have placed every button into a category. Then have them draw a diagram to show how they sorted the buttons. When they have finished they can share how their group sorted the buttons. Introduce one new button and have the groups figure out where it will fit in their system.



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