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The Science of Life: Animal Classification

Laura Trumbo

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Book Review

Title: The Science of Life: Animal Classification

Author: Jennifer Fretland VanVoorst

Reviewer: Laura Trumbo

Publisher: Abdo Publishing Company

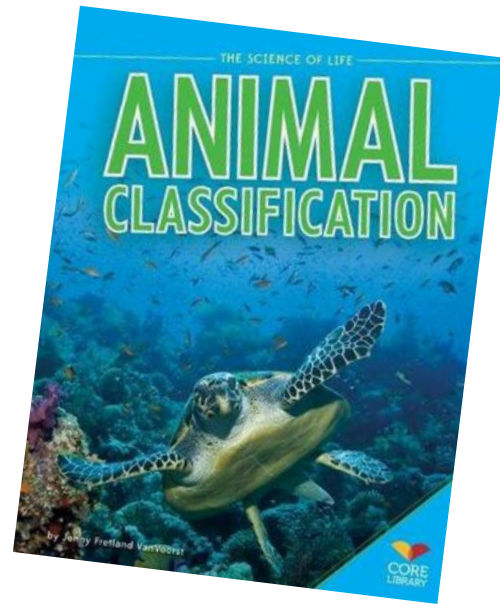
Publication Year: 2014

ISBN: 9781624031571

Number of Pages: 48

Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Dependable



Review

The Science of Life: Animal Classification is a reference book that introduces young readers to how scientists classify and organize animals. Without going into depth, Jenny VanVoorst defines important terms like taxonomy, and takes the reader on a brief sampling of the animal kingdom. She begins with taxonomy's founding father, describes all the divisions of animal classification, and ends with explaining where the human reader fits within taxonomy's classification system.

The Science of Life: Animal Classification does a good job introducing children to taxonomy using simple language. However, good organization is just as important as word choice in making a scientific text comprehensible, and this is where the book could do better. Chapter one is dedicated to introducing the concept of taxonomy, but fails to clearly explain the categories and subcategories used by scientists. The book jumps straight to the concept of "species" without explaining where it falls within the overall scheme. The patient reader will find a helpful diagram on page 22 and an explanation of classes, orders, families, and species on pages 36-37, but these would be much more useful toward the beginning of the book. Overall, the book is a pleasant and informative read. It successfully teaches interesting aspects of taxonomy that the reader may not know, like that birds and reptiles share dinosaur ancestry, or that rocks and crystals used to have their own kingdom. Also, like any good reference book, it gives helpful citations to two good animal encyclopedias for further learning.