

Hello, Class 5. Here's some SCIENCE.

What have we found out so far?

For the last few weeks in Science we have sorted living things into groups. We sorted animals (vertebrates and invertebrates) and plants (trees, in particular) by looking at what made them different from each other.

From here on, we will be in a different topic – about THE HUMAN BODY – but we should start with what we learnt from the previous one.

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Humans are ANIMALS.

Do humans have backbones? Yes. Any animal with a backbone is called a VERTEBRATE.

Are humans warm-blooded? The word “warm” is a bit vague but our blood does have a steady temperature whether we are in a cold place or a warm place. Our bodies keep it at that temperature, so yes, we are warm-blooded.

Do humans lay eggs? Pause for a moment to imagine that... That's not a nice thing to imagine, is it? No, of course we don't lay eggs.

Do we have scales... or feathers... or hair? We have hair. Just at the moment, it's difficult to get a haircut, so most of us have quite a lot of hair.

All this means we are MAMMALS.

And so are dogs, cats, guinea pigs and sheep. Strangely enough so are whales, dolphins and the pink fairy armadillo (and that is a real animal!).

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So we are mammals. What does that tell us?

Mammals have a set of body systems that all work at the same time to keep us working smoothly and safely whether we are awake or asleep. In a giraffe, these systems are enormous; in a mouse, they are tiny – but the set of systems is the same

There are ... wait for it... TWELVE of these body systems!

The good news is that we don't have to learn about all twelve just now. Seven or eight of them will do. (Still sounds a lot though, doesn't it?)

But if you are feeling clever, look up the missing ones to find out what they do.

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Two of the body systems that are most VITAL (this is a clever word because though it usually just means ‘important’, ‘vital’ actually means ‘in order to stay alive’) are the

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM and the CIRCULATORY SYSTEM.

I have never come up with a way of teaching anyone about one of these two without teaching about the other at the same time, because THEY WORK TOGETHER ALL THE TIME.

RESPIRATION is what your body does by using the Respiratory System and the Circulatory System together.

The question that gets us going is...

WHY do we BREATHE?

...and, no, you aren't allowed to answer, “Because we'll die if we don't”.

Perhaps I should have asked “What is BREATH for?”