

## Dichotomous Key Activity

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A dichotomous key is a very useful tool. It helps you identify unknown organisms by using a system that breaks down the characteristics of a set of organisms into **TWO groups** over and over again until you only have one organism in a group (**Di = two and you only have two choices at each splitting of groups**).

In this activity, we will be creating a dichotomous key for a foreign exchange student, who is about to discover the candies we eat in Canada, (some of which we will use in this activity).

Things to remember:

1. Keep the descriptions simple.
2. Work with one subgroup at a time.
3. Make sure your number corresponds to your descriptions.

I. In the space below, list ideas as to how to classify your candy. List as many as you can so that you have a good amount of information to work with.

Eg. Soft versus hard

II. In the space below, list the name of the candies you have chosen to classify, and give each group a **new and original name**. These new names are the names you will use in your dichotomous key.

Real Name	New Name

III. Now, as a group, fill in your flow chart in order to create your dichotomous key.

IV. Once your flowchart has been filled, design your dichotomous key.

V. Answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of a dichotomous key (or any key, for that matter)?

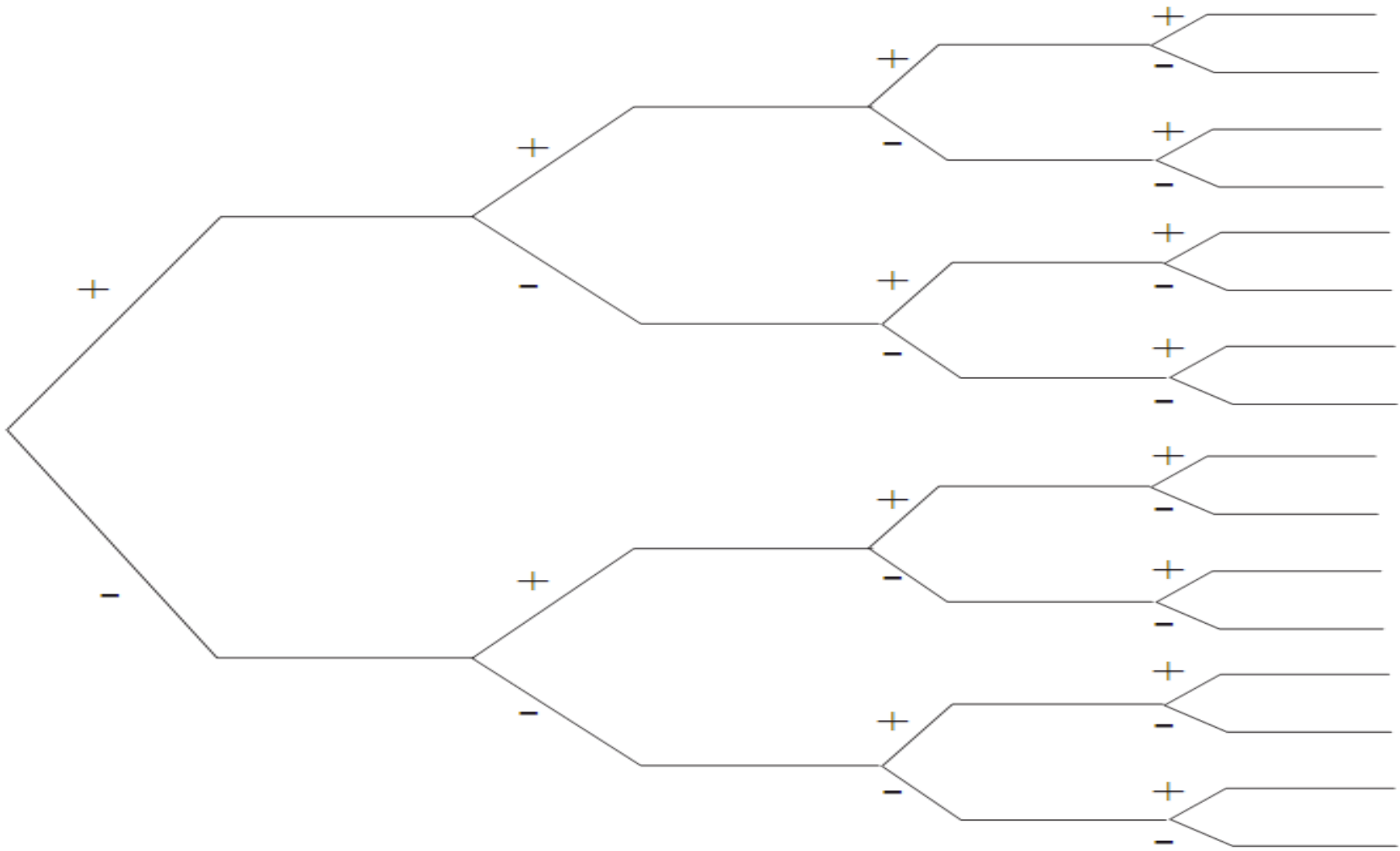


# Dichotomous Key

Write the characteristic on the horizontal line

A positive (+) symbol indicates that the object has that characteristic

A negative (-) symbol indicates that the object being keyed does not have that characteristic



Use the information from your flowchart to create your key:

GROUP #

Steps of Dichotomous Key	Go to #
1 A	
B	
2 A	
B	
3 A	
B	
4 A	
B	
5 A	
B	
6 A	
B	
7 A	
B	

8 A	
B	
9 A	
B	
10 A	
B	
11 A	
B	
12 A	
B	
13 A	
B	
14 A	
B	