

WEEKDAY WONDERS



Content developed by the
Tennessee Aquarium
Education Department



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Diversity of Living Things: Day 4

This week through Weekday Wonders, young scientists will delve into the diversity of living things. The week starts with your scientist discovering basic physical characteristics of animals. Then scientists will explore how these characteristics are tools to help sort animals into groups. Young scientists finish the week by looking at how the differences in these characteristics, even within the same group, play an important role in their survival.

These curated activities are listed in a suggested sequence but may be done in the order that works best for you and your young scientists. Learn more about this series in the [Introduction to Weekday Wonders](#).



Question of the Day

How are the characteristics of individual animals of the same kind similar and different?



Daily Nature Journal

Ask your young scientists to spend some time outside completing their daily nature journal. If you need additional information about this process, see the [Guide to Nature Journaling](#).



Bed Scavenger Hunt

Have your young scientist go around the house and find all the beds (pet and toy beds can be included). Ask him or her to draw or take note of each of the beds they find.

Once your scientist returns from the scavenger hunt, ask how many beds he or she found. Ask your scientist if all the beds were the same. If not, ask your scientist to tell you about some of the differences noticed. Since there were differences between the beds, how does your young scientist know that they are beds—what characteristics did s/he use to identify each as a bed?

To extend this activity, you could send them on another hunt to search for chairs, pillows, spoons, etc. You want your young scientist to think about the characteristics that make items the same but also realize that there is variation between items of the same kind.



Can You Find Me?

Show the picture on page 3 to your young scientist. Tell him or her that all of these animals are the same kind or species. Have your scientist look closely. Ask if all the animals look the same. What differences can your scientist find?

You can also turn this activity into a game of “I Spy” with your young scientists. Remember to look for differences between the individuals, such as color, size, pattern, etc. You may wish to print the picture and have your scientist mark differences and similarities between the birds using two different colors of pen.

Tell your young scientist that these animals are all lovebirds. Ask your scientist:

- Why do you think the lovebirds have differences even though they are the same kind of animal?
- How do you think it might be beneficial for the lovebirds to have both similarities and differences?

You can extend this lesson by having your scientist think of another animal and discussing what differences they might see among individuals of that kind of animal. What advantage might there be for that animal to have some similarities and some differences?



Nature Journal

Ask your young scientist to think about today’s Weekday Wonders activities. Ask your scientist to go outside and try to find two plants or animals that are the same kind (species). Have them draw or write about the similarities and differences.

If your scientist has trouble finding two plants or animals that are the same kind, have him or her choose a plant or animal to draw. Tell him or her to try to draw it two times with some similarities and some differences. Your scientist should indicate what is the same and what is different using pens of two different colors.



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