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# VISUAL THESAURUS LESSON PLANS **STUDENT WORKBOOK**



## LESSON 5:

**UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE VOCABULARY AND CATEGORIZATION****OBJECTIVE:**

Scientific language can be very different from everyday language. For instance, all plants and animals have a specific scientific name (usually Latin or with Latin roots) in addition to a common name. Groups of related plants and animals can be easily identified through their scientific names and categories (i.e., genus, order, family). In addition, scientific language gives you a way to differentiate types of species within a larger group, such as the various types of oak trees or monkeys, or to be more specific about plant and animal characteristics, such as the various shapes of tree leaves. Exploring common animal and plant names using a thesaurus can give you an appreciation of the diversity of organisms in the plant and animal worlds.

In this lesson, you will explore the scientific names and categories of common plants and animals, find new words to describe their characteristics, and compare word choices for scientific and creative writing.



**PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

- ① Think about one of the following plant or animal names. Do you know the scientific name of the animal or the scientific categories it belongs to? Before you begin, write down the scientific name/category, if you know it, and also some ideas you have about the plant or animal.



ROSE	BAMBOO	ANT	BUTTERCUP
CAT	DOG		
MONKEY	ELEPHANT	OAK TREE	TULIP

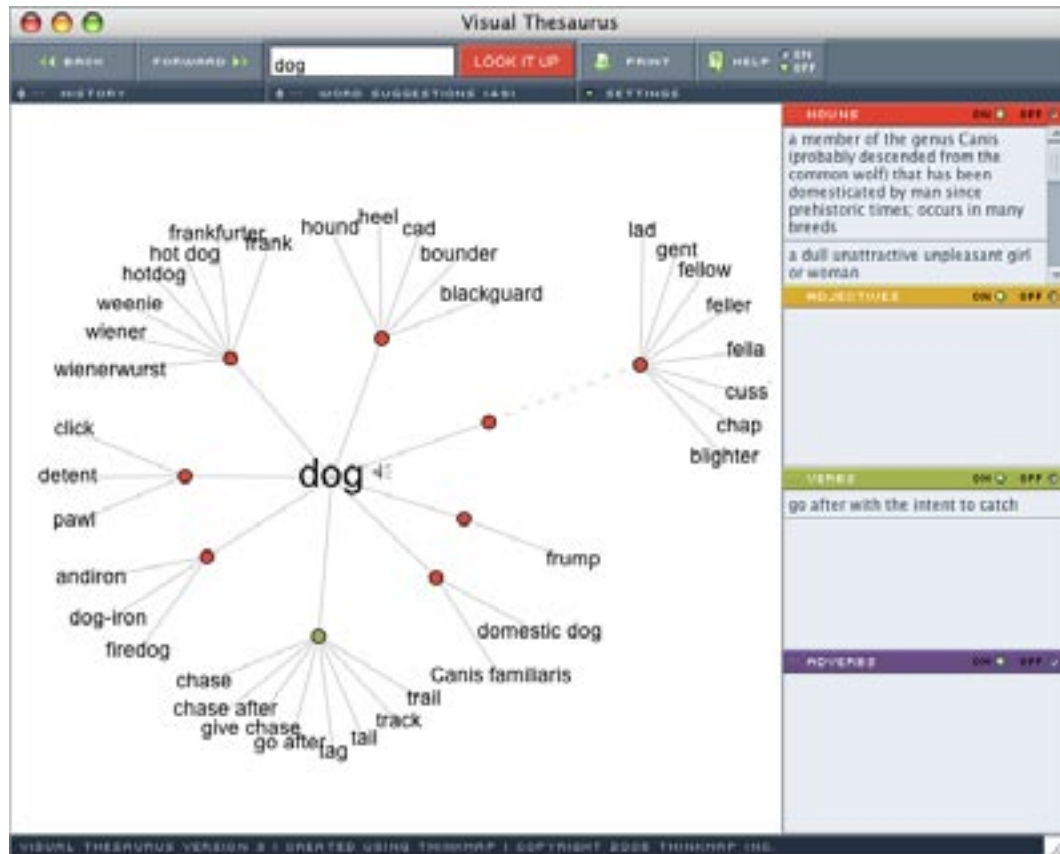
scientific name/category: .....

ideas about plant or animal: .....

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- ② Animal and plant names are nouns. Also, select 2-D viewing from the Display Settings Menu in the Settings tab.
- ③ Choose one of the plant or animal names. Type into the VT Enter a Word box.



- 4 There should be one or more red circles connected to your word. (These are nouns with related meanings.) Roll over the circle and read the definition that best pertains to the animal. Click on the circle or on the definition in the right hand column.
- 5 What happens? How do you think the words are connected now? If you only see one or two word results, try clicking again on one of the red circles or a common definition.

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- 6 Think about the words on the screen: How do these words relate to the scientific categories of the plant or animal? Can you identify different categories of the scientific names (i.e., family, order, genus, species) within the main plant or animal and of related plants or animals? How many different names are listed?

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- 7 Scroll over the lines connecting words. The relationship between the words should pop up. Find dashed lines that read: “is a type of.” How many types are listed?

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- 8 Look back to your initial description of the plant or animal; can you add more specific details or characteristics now? What do you think about the range of plants/animals presented on the screen?

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## PART 2: NEXT STEPS

Let's explore some characteristics of your plant or animal, or chose a new one for this exercise.

- 1 Write down as many descriptive words as you can for the plant or animal. (For instance: a cat has fur, has claws, can be wild or domestic, etc.)

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- 2 Choose 2 or 3 of these characteristics to explore within the Visual Thesaurus. Put these words in the Enter a Word box.

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- 3 What new characteristics or words did the Visual Thesaurus come up with? How do these words compare with the words you chose? Are all the words related to your plant or animal? Did you learn any new words or concepts related to your plant or animal?

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- 4 If you were writing a scientific report on the plant or animal, which words would be the best to use?

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- 5 If you were writing a poem or a creative story featuring the plant or animal, which words would be the best to use?

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- 6 Is there a difference in the word choices? What are some of the similarities and differences in the word choices you made for scientific or creative writing?

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## PART 3: CHALLENGE

- 1** Write a scientific-style report, a creative story or a poem related to your plant or animal. If you only use the Visual Thesaurus as a resource, which style of writing will be easiest to complete? Why do you think so?

A cartoon character wearing a helmet and holding a sign that says "CHALLENGE!!". The character is standing on the right side of the page, and the sign is held up high. The rest of the page is blank with horizontal dotted lines.