

Carl Linnaeus

(1707 - 1778)

Carolus Linnaeus (known as Carl) was a Swedish scientist who devised a new way of classifying living things into groups. This method became known as the Linnaean System, or taxonomy.



Growing Up

As a boy, Linnaeus loved nature, especially plants and was taught about botany by his father in their garden. Linnaeus preferred being outside to studying in a classroom. When he left school, he went to university to study medicine.



Did You Know...?

Linnaeus was the first scientist to put humans and primates in the same family group.

His Work

Linnaeus proposed that the whole of nature could be classified into three kingdoms: plants, animals and minerals. Each kingdom was then split into progressively smaller groups or levels. For example, Linnaeus placed the animal kingdom into six initial groups:

- mammals
- birds
- amphibians
- fish
- insects
- worms



He gave each animal, plant and mineral a two-part, scientific name in Latin. He also sorted them according to how important and powerful they were. This is known as a hierarchy.

Before Linnaeus' system was devised, there was no agreed way to classify species and it was difficult for scientists to work out which were related. The Linnaean System is still used to classify animals and plants today but no longer includes minerals. It has been revised and additional levels have been added as new living things have been discovered. In addition, kingdoms are no longer at the top of the hierarchy, with a new level called 'domains' now appearing above them.

Linnaeus wrote several books about plants and nature, one was called 'The System of Nature', which he updated over many years.

In Science we have learnt all about classification of living things. As part of this we have researched Carl Linnaeus and his impact on the way in which we still classify living things today. Please carry out independent research to further your knowledge on Carl. Then create a poster sharing what you now know, this can be created in any way you wish – digitally or not! Be as creative as you can! Please ask if you would like any paper. If you do complete it online, you are more than welcome to e-mail it over.

Thanks for your continued support.