

Lesson 2: Main Topics and Subtopics



Key Learning Concept: In outlining, the heading is the **MAIN TOPIC** or main idea. The related items grouped below it are the **SUBTOPICS** that support the main topic.

DIRECTIONS

Read ALL the items first. Then select **five MAIN TOPICS**; write the MAIN TOPICS on each top line; group related ideas under the appropriate MAIN TOPICS. Arrange the subtopics under each main topic in alphabetical order.

WORD BANK (20 ITEMS)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| ☐ Horses | ☐ Small animals | ☐ Eagles | ☐ Cats |
| ☐ Robins | ☐ Squirrels | ☐ Fish | ☐ Bears |
| ☐ Insects | ☐ Goldfish | ☐ Raccoons | ☐ Dogfish |
| ☐ Butterflies | ☐ Sparrows | ☐ Beetles | ☐ Birds |
| ☐ Cows | ☐ Fruit flies | ☐ Large animals | ☐ Perch |



"Find the 5 big topics first!"

TOPIC:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

TOPIC:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

TOPIC:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

TOPIC:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

TOPIC:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

COMPLETE CLASSIFICATION SOLUTIONS (20 PTS TOTAL: 5 PTS TOPICS + 15 PTS SUBTOPICS)

Birds

- ✓ Eagles
- ✓ Robins
- ✓ Sparrows

Fish

- ✓ Dogfish
- ✓ Goldfish
- ✓ Perch

Insects

- ✓ Beetles
- ✓ Butterflies
- ✓ Fruit flies

Large animals

- ✓ Bears
- ✓ Cows
- ✓ Horses

Small animals

- ✓ Cats
- ✓ Raccoons
- ✓ Squirrels

Alphabetical Arrangement Note: Subtopics under each Main Topic should ideally be arranged alphabetically (e.g. Bears, Cows, Horses). If students group correctly but in a different sequence, award full credit and remind them of the alphabetical direction.

 HIERARCHICAL SCHEMA FORMATION

Taxonomical Cognition:

- **Superordinate vs. Subordinate:** Students learn to differentiate overarching category labels (*Birds, Fish*) from exemplar members (*Eagles, Goldfish*).
- **Pre-Writing Scaffolding:** Moving from sorting isolated words to establishing paragraph headers and supporting evidence.

 DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES

Tier 1 / Tier 2 Scaffolding (Struggling Learners & ELs):

- **Highlighting Strategy:** Have students highlight the 5 broad group words first (*Birds, Fish, Insects, Large animals, Small animals*) before writing.
- **Vocabulary Support:** Clarify terms like *Dogfish* (a small marine shark/fish) and *Perch* (a freshwater fish).

Tier 3 / Extension (Gifted & Advanced):

- Have students synthesize all 5 groups into a master kingdom outline: I. *Vertebrates* and II. *Invertebrates*.

 DIAGNOSTIC GUIDE: COMMON STUDENT MISCONCEPTIONS & INTERVENTION PROMPTS

Common Misconception	Underlying Cognitive Trap	Teacher Intervention Prompt
Mistaking "Dogfish" for a Canine or Mammal	Compound word interference (sees "dog" and ignores "fish").	"Look at the second half of the compound word: 'fish'. A dogfish is actually a small shark that lives in the ocean, making it a fish!"
Writing "Robins" or "Eagles" on the Top Line	Selecting a specific exemplar as a Main Topic heading instead of the umbrella term.	"Can a Sparrow be called an Eagle? No! But can both Sparrows and Eagles be called Birds? Yes! 'Birds' is the broader Main Topic."
Confusing Small vs. Large Animals	Lack of physical size benchmarking in domestic vs. wild animals.	"Compare a cat or squirrel to a full-grown horse, cow, or grizzly bear. Which ones weigh hundreds of pounds? Those are Large animals."

 STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT & SCORING RUBRIC (TOTAL: 20 POINTS)

Criteria	Performance Description	Scoring Guide	Max Pts
Main Topics Identification	Correctly identifies the 5 umbrella categories (Birds, Fish, Insects, Large animals, Small animals) on the top lines.	1 point per correct Main Topic heading (5 topics)	5 pts
Subtopics Classification	Correctly sorts all 15 animal exemplars under their appropriate Main Topic heading.	1 point per correctly placed subtopic (15 items)	15 pts