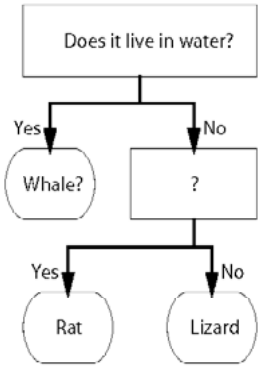
# Using IT in... animals

## Can you identify an animal?




Getting the children to build a **branching database** on animals is an excellent way to make them observe animals closely. You can start with a collection of animal pictures and sort them into groups. Or you can play a '20 questions' game where the class have to guess the animal one child has chosen. After these starter activities they use the branching database program to 'teach' the computer about the animals in their collection.

See the branching database topic

IT: Handling information

## What are our favourite pets?

The children can do a survey to find the most popular pets - an exercise in recording and organising data. They might give out a list and ask their peers which pet they like best, or they might get them to score their favourite as 1, the next favourite as 2 and so on. They can put the results into a **graphing program** and produce a pie chart. What does the graph tell them? Is the winning pet way ahead of the second best? Are the less popular pets much less popular?

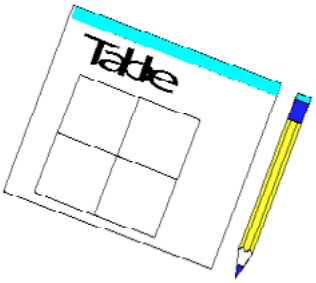
IT: Handling information

## Can you make a device to feed the cat?

Using a computer **control box** you can create a device which meters out food during the day. The children can use a control program to activate the device at certain times of the day.

IT: Control

## What is alive?

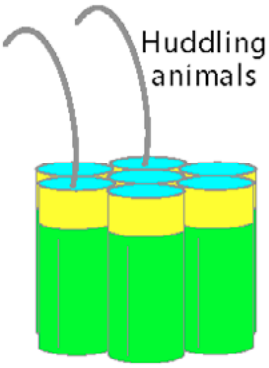



The children can do a survey of a patch of ground, and list and sort out the things they find. They might use a portable computer to take notes, but whatever, they can use a **word processor** to sort the things they find into living, non-living, once living but now dead or never living. Modern word processors make it very easy to move text around on screen to experiment with their ideas.

IT: Handling information

## How do animals keep warm?

You might have heard that penguins huddle together to keep warm. This shows how animals adapt to their environment. The children can investigate whether this really helps them - by using tins of hot water dressed as furry mammals. They could arrange one tin on its own, and another as part of a huddle. They could then use **temperature sensors** to compare how fast the lone and the huddling animals cool. This activity requires some good planning and it's worth doing a test run and discussing ways to make it fair.




You can also see how fur helps animals in their environment - investigating any of these questions using tin cans, warm water and **temperature sensors**: how does fur help an animal? Does fur still work when it is wet? When animals are cold, skin muscles pull their hair up straight - does 'fur up' work better than 'fur down'?

IT: Measuring