



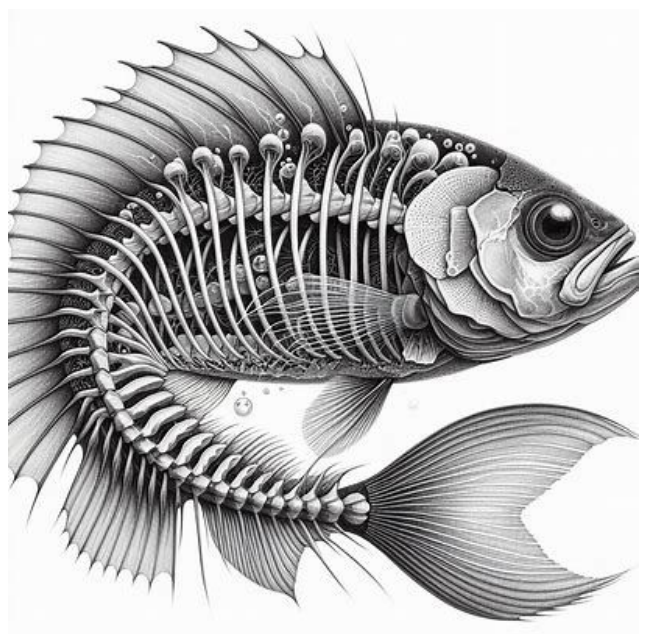
Name: _____

Vertebrates and Invertebrates

Did you know that animals come in different shapes and sizes? Some animals have a backbone, while others don't. Scientists use a special word to describe this difference: vertebrates and invertebrates.

Let's start with vertebrates. Vertebrates are animals that have a backbone or spine. This bony structure runs along their back and helps support their body. Examples of vertebrates include mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Each group has its own unique features.

Mammals, like us humans, have fur or hair, and they give birth to live babies. Birds have feathers and lay eggs, while reptiles are known for their scales and laying eggs too. Amphibians, such as frogs and salamanders, usually start their lives in water and then move to land. Fish, with their scales and gills, live in water all their lives.



Now, let's talk about invertebrates. Unlike vertebrates, invertebrates do not have a backbone. Instead, they come in various shapes and sizes, and there are many different types of them. Invertebrates make up about 97% of all animal species!

Insects are a common type of invertebrate. They have six legs, an exoskeleton (a hard outer covering), and often wings. Think about butterflies, bees, and ants - they are all insects! Spiders are another group of invertebrates. They have eight legs and make silk to build webs. Other invertebrates include worms, snails, jellyfish, and starfish.

Animals, whether vertebrates or invertebrates, play important roles in our world. They come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, and each type has its own special features. So, the next time you see a bug crawling or a bird flying, you'll know whether it's a vertebrate or an invertebrate!

1. In your own words, explain how having a backbone helps vertebrates.
