

## Dichotomous Candy Key Activity

**Objective:** Students will learn about scientific classification by sorting candy, and discovering its scientific Genus species name. This will simulate scientists' use of keys to sort and identify trees and wildlife, build observation and classification skills, and lead to developing questions to determine differences.

Print, and cut out each station individually, and place each station in order from 1-11 clockwise throughout the classroom, or out of doors. Have each student pick out 3 different pieces of candy from the list below (provide at least 3 choices). Students will carry one piece of their candy at a time, from station to station following the station directions, until they've keyed out its identity—and record the Genus species beside a sketch of the candy, along with the candy's common name if they know it. Repeat with each piece of candy.

The “common” names of the candies represented in the key are: Gummi Bears, Saltwater taffy, Caramels (square in a clear wrapper), Hershey's Kisses, Starburst, Jolly Ranchers, Gobstoppers, Peppermint discs, Butterscotch discs, Dum Dum suckers, and wrapped Fireball jawbreakers.

**Extension:** Have student groups have one piece of 11 different candies, have them build out their own dichotomous key on a table by sorting the candies first into two groups, then each of those groups into two more-etc., until all candy is keyed out. Then have them write out their key.

### Answer Key

<b>Common name</b>	<b>Genus species (“latin” name)</b>
2b Gummi bears	<i>Ursa gummus</i>
4a Saltwater taffy	<i>Saltus taffinia</i>
5a Caramels	<i>Caramellius stickimus</i>
6a Hershey's Kiss	<i>Chocolatus cyssan</i>
6b Starburst	<i>Steorra explodes</i>
9b Jolly Rancher	<i>Joyous rancheria</i>
8b Jawbreakers	<i>Mandibulus crackus</i>
10a Peppermint disk	<i>Mintus stripus</i>
10b Butterscotch disk	<i>Ranunculus scotchus</i>
11a Dum Dums	<i>Moronus moronus</i>
11b Fireballs	<i>Spherus combustus</i>

### **Station 1**

1a Candy is not hard (gives when you bite it gently).....go to 2

1b Candy is hard (does not give) .....go to 7

### **Station 2**

2a Candy is wrapped.....go to 3

2b Candy is not wrapped.....Ursa gummus

### **Station 3**

3a Candy is a thick circle.....go to 4

3b Candy is not a thick circle .....go to 5

### **Station 4**

4a Wrapper is all white.....Saltus taffinia

4b Wrapper is not all white.....go to 5

### **Station 5**

5a Wrapper is clear .....Caramellus stickimus

5b Wrapper is not clear.....go to 6

### **Station 6**

6a Wrapper is silver .....Chocolatus cyssan

6b Wrapper varies in color.....Steorra explodes

### **Station 7**

7a Candy is spherical (a ball) .....go to 8

7b Candy is not spherical .....go to 9

### **Station 8**

8a Candy is wrapped .....go to 11

8b Candy is not wrapped .....Mandibulus crackus

### **Station 9**

9a Wrapper does not tell the flavor.....go to 10

9b Wrapper tells the flavor .....Joyous rancheria

### **Station 10**

10a Wrapper is clear.....Mintus stripus

10b Wrapper is yellow .....Ranunculus scotchus

### **Station 11**

11a Candy is on a stick.....Moronus moronus

11b Candy is not on a stick.....Spherus combustus