

## How to Use a Dichotomous Key

A dichotomous key is a tool used for identifying an unknown item or organism. “Dichotomous” means “**divided into two parts.**” A dichotomous key always gives **two** choices in each step. In each step, you must make a decision based on characteristics of the item. If you decide correctly every time, the name of the item will be revealed at the end.

Always read and consider both choices, even if the first one seems to be appropriate. Jumping to conclusions may lead to the wrong classification of the item.

You must understand the meaning of the words used in each choice before you can decide correctly. If you are not sure of the meaning of a term used in the key, look it up in a dictionary or use appropriate resources available to you. Find examples of other things that share that characteristic. For example, if the key is used for classifying trees and asks you to decide if the leaf margin is “lobed” or “not lobed”, make sure you know what lobes are and look for examples of other leaves that are lobed and not lobed. Then you will better be able to decide with certainty. Never guess. Take your time. Never guess, as this could lead to the wrong classification of the item.

When there are measurements given in the choices, use the appropriate measuring tools to measure your item. If the measurements are given in centimeters, use a centimeter ruler. Do not approximate and do not guess. Measure carefully.

Once you have identified all of your items, carefully read the description of each item to make sure they match. If you are left with two possible answers, read the description of both and decide which one seems to fit your item best.

## Dichotomous Key for Cartoon Students

Start at number 1 on the key. Read both choices, and follow the directions based on your choice. When you reach a name, you have identified the cartoon student. Record the names you identify on your answer sheet.

1. Student has a pointed chin ..... go to 2  
Student has a rounded chin..... go to 3
2. Student lips are parted, revealing their teeth ..... go to 4  
Student lips are not parted ..... go to 5
3. Student eyes are brown ..... go to 6  
Student eyes are not brown ..... go to 7
4. Student has green eyes ..... go to 8  
Student does not have green eyes ..... go to 9
5. Student has red hair ..... go to 10  
Student does not have red hair ..... go to 11
6. Student is wearing an orange hoodie .....go to 14  
Student is not wearing an orange hoodie ..... go to 15
7. Student has round shaped eyes ..... go to 16  
Student has almond shaped eyes ..... go to 17
8. Student has a light, pinkish skin tone ..... **Carson**  
Student medium brown skin tone ..... **Devin**
9. Student has curly hair ..... **Jamie**  
Student has straight hair ..... **Dakota**
10. Student has blue eyes ..... go to 12  
Student not have blue eyes ..... go to 13
11. Student is wearing a blue hoodie ..... **Justice**  
Student is wearing an orange hoodie ..... **Emerson**
12. Student is wearing glasses ..... **Avery**  
Student is not wearing glasses ..... **Bailey**
13. Student has wavy hair ..... **Casey**  
Student has straight hair ..... **Aiden**
14. Student has almond shaped eyes ..... **Morgan**  
Student has round shaped eyes ..... **Parker**
15. Student has black hair ..... **Logan**  
Student has brown hair ..... **Shawn**
16. Student has green eyes ..... go to 18  
Student has blue eyes ..... go to 19
17. Student has blond hair ..... **Piper**  
Student has brown hair ..... **Rowan**
18. Student is wearing glasses ..... **Shane**  
Student is not wearing glasses ..... **Kennedy**
19. Student is wearing a green hoodie ..... **Sydney**  
Student is wearing a yellow hoodie ..... **Kelly**

## Cartoon Student Descriptions

1. **Avery** has curly red hair, blue eyes, a medium brown skin tone, and he is wearing glasses.
2. **Morgan** has a round face, long straight brown hair, almond shaped brown eyes, and light colored skin.
3. **Aiden** has straight red hair, round brown eyes, a pointy chin, and he has his lips closed.
4. **Piper** has long wavy blond hair, almond shaped green eyes, and medium brown skin. She is not smiling.
5. **Justice** has a blue hoodie, he has short brown curly hair, round brown eyes, and dark brown skin.
6. **Kennedy** has long straight blond hair, round green eyes, tan skin, a blue hoodie, and she is smiling.
7. **Bailey** has big round blue eyes, a pointed chin, a yellow hoodie, and she is not showing her teeth.
8. **Logan** has light skin, short straight black hair, almond shaped dark eyes, a blue hoodie, and a big smile.
9. **Devin** has long wavy hair, medium brown skin, a pointed chin, and she is smiling.
10. **Kelly** has short curly black hair, a round face, round blue eyes, tan skin, a yellow hoodie, and a smile.
11. **Carson** has fair skin, short straight black hair, and his hoodie matches his green eyes. He is smiling.
12. **Sydney** has long straight black hair, big round blue eyes, dark brown skin, a green hoodie, and a smile.
13. **Jamie** has short blond curly hair, a fair pinkish skin tone, and her hoodie matches her blue eyes.
14. **Shane** has dark brown hair and skin, round green eyes, a bright orange hoodie, a smile, and glasses.
15. **Emerson** has pinkish skin, short brown curly hair, almond shaped brown eyes, and an orange hoodie.
16. **Parker** has big round brown eyes, short curly black hair, and orange hoodie, and his lips are closed.
17. **Casey** has long, red hair, big round green eyes, dark brown skin, and she is wearing a blue hoodie.
18. **Shawn** has big round brown eyes, dark brown skin, short brown hair, and a yellow hoodie.
19. **Dakota** has straight black hair, bright blue eyes, straight teeth, and he's wearing a yellow hoodie
20. **Rowan** has short wavy brown hair, almond shaped blue eyes, tan skin, a green hoodie, and a smile.

