



Sedgwick Museum  
of Earth Sciences

# What's in a name?

Did you know that 10-20% of all creatures dredged up from the Antarctic sea beds are completely new to science?

These new discoveries all need a Scientific Name to help us to identify them; scientists use all sorts of different ways to name the new plants, animals and fossils they find.

## Two parts

Scientific names usually have two parts, just as people have a first name and a family name.

## Latin or Ancient Greek

Quite often the names use words from Latin or Ancient Greek.

## Name it after a friend

Lots of scientists name fossils after their friends. Adam Sedgwick, the famous geologist, has two fossils named *Sedgwickii* after him. They are both on display in the Sedgwick Museum which is named after him as well. The museum's director Dr Ken McNamara, has an extinct shark named after him, it's called *Kenolamna*.

*Kenolamna tooth*



## How does it look?

Often names describe the way the fossil looks. Archaeopteryx is made up of two Ancient Greek words: Archaeo which means 'ancient' and Pteron which means 'wing'.

Archaeopteryx fossil

## Your Challenge

Pick one **adjective** and one **noun** and then draw a creature to match your description. Or how about naming it after a friend!

Think about how your creature might have moved and behaved when it was alive.



# Resources

Print and laminate a selection of nouns and adjectives and their translation in to Greek or Latin. Colour-code them so it is easy to take one of each.

Some examples:

## Adjectives

White = albus (Latin)

Strange = anomalos (Greek)

## Nouns

Tail = cauda (Latin)

Head = cephalus (Greek)

Use these Greek and Latin translators to make your own word lists.

[www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/search](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/search)

[www.dicts.info/dictionary.php?l1=English&l2=Latin](http://www.dicts.info/dictionary.php?l1=English&l2=Latin)

