



## Activity 1.4

### GRADES

3-6

### TYPE OF ACTIVITY

Identification Puzzle

### MATERIALS

- copies of pages 27-29
- scissors
- glue or tape

### VOCABULARY

cap  
dichotomous key  
pores  
spines  
stem

# Key to the Fungal Treasures

### OBJECTIVE

- To familiarize students with the diversity of basic shapes of fungal fruiting bodies using “key-like” deductions.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

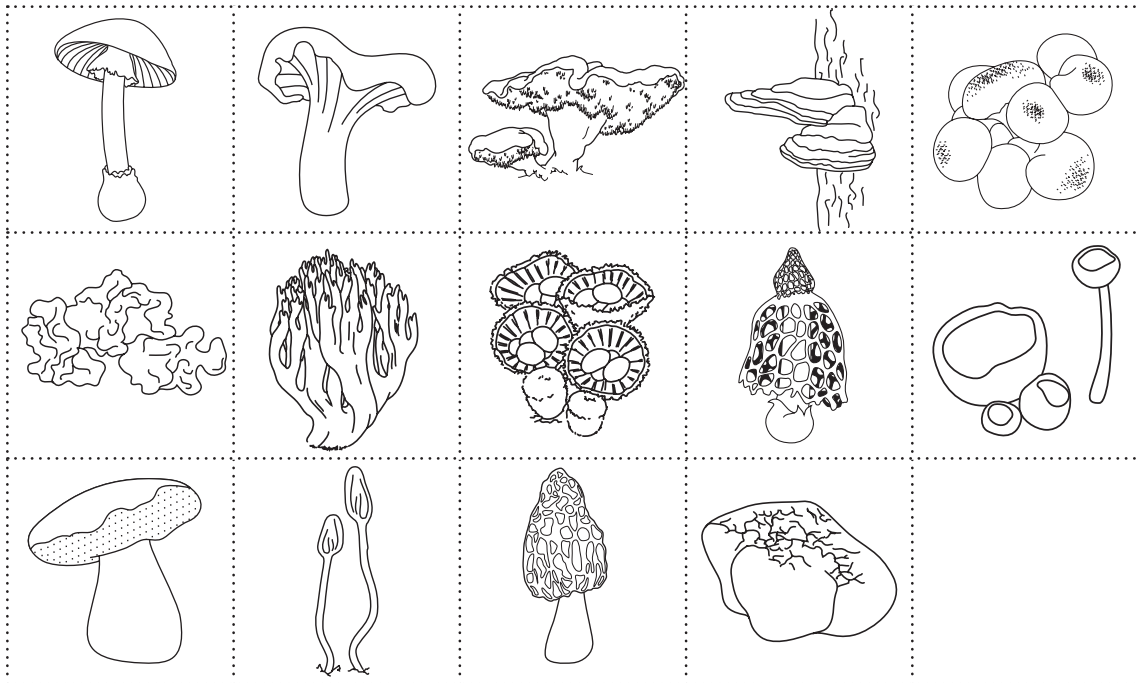
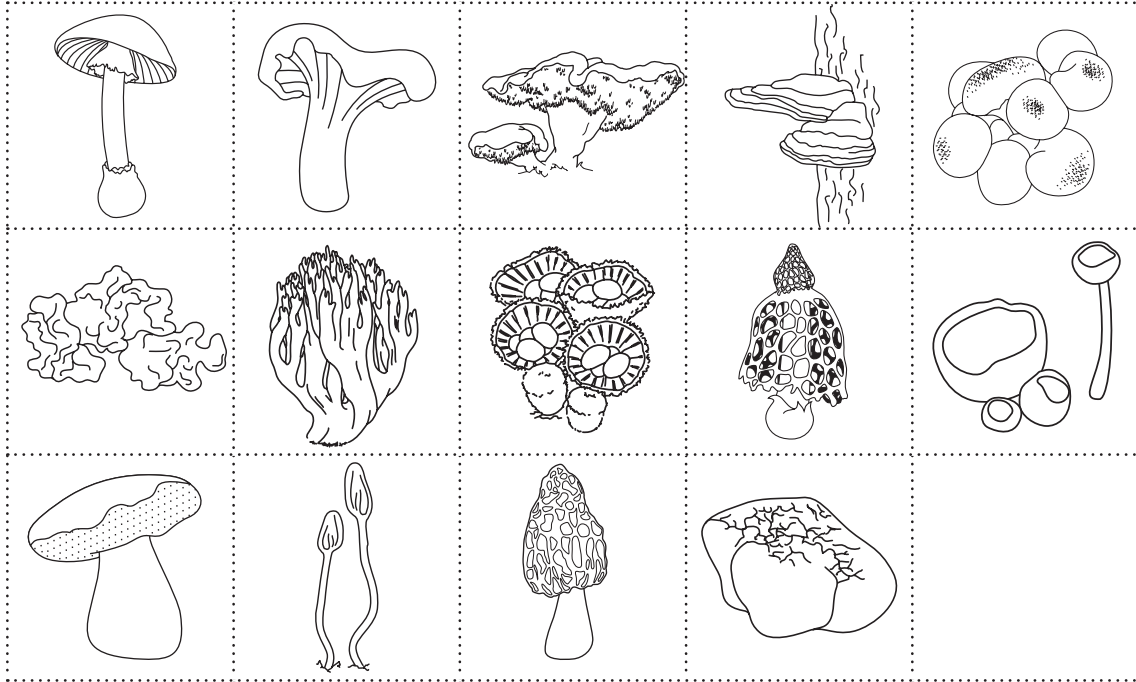
Scientists and naturalists use **dichotomous keys** to identify unknown organisms. A dichotomous key is structured on a series of choices between alternative characteristics. Although this activity does not reflect the perfect binary of a true dichotomous key, students are still introduced to the basic principles of keys for identification.

### TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

1. Copy a “Key to the Fungal Treasure” map and a set of mushroom stamps for each student.
2. Tell students they are going to identify 14 mushrooms.
3. Have them cut out the mushroom stamps and, by answering the questions, place them on the map.
4. When they are sure they have them in the right place (or you have checked over their map), have them tape or glue the mushrooms in place.
6. As a class discuss these mushrooms. Are students surprised to see the various shapes? Which of these groups are students already familiar with?

### ANSWER KEY

Agaric <b>1</b>	Chanterelle <b>14</b>	Teeth Fungi <b>3</b>	Polypores <b>7</b>	Puffballs <b>8</b>
Jelly Fungi <b>6</b>	Coral Fungi <b>9</b>	Bird’s Nest Fungi <b>4</b>	Basket Stinkhorn <b>13</b>	Cup Fungi <b>5</b>
Bolete <b>2</b>	Earth Tongues <b>11</b>	Morel <b>12</b>	Truffle <b>10</b>	



# Key To The Fungal Treasure

3

Tooth fungi

Does it have lots of jagged spines under the cap?

Yes

No

2

Bolete

Does it look spongy underneath the cap?

Yes

No

1

Agaric

Does it have gills under the cap?

Yes

Yes

Does it have a cap and stem?

No



Start here

Bird's Nest Fungi

4

Does the cup look like a little nest with eggs?"

Yes

Yes

Is it cup shaped?

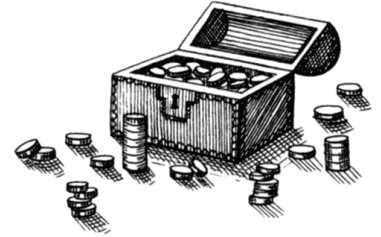
No

Does it look like a shelf growing on a tree?

Yes

7

Polypores



5

Cup fungi

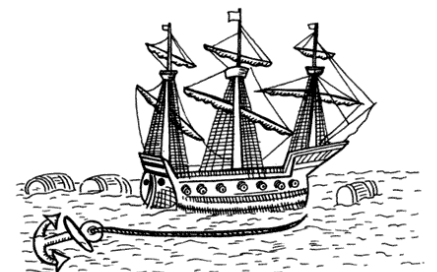
Does it look shapeless, rubbery, and like seaweed?

No

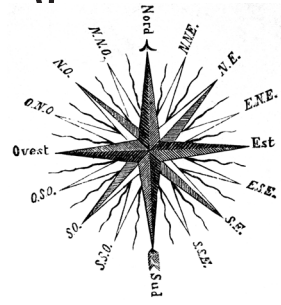
Yes

6

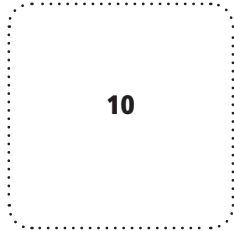
Jelly fungi



Oops. You've reached the end of the map.  
Go back to the start and try again! Good



Truffle



No

Does it look like a rock or an old potato?

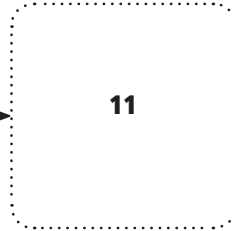
Yes

No

Does it look like a matchstick with a flattened head?

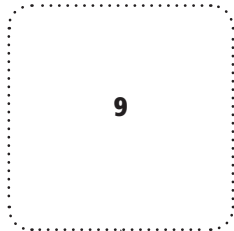
Yes

11



Earth tongues

Coral fungi



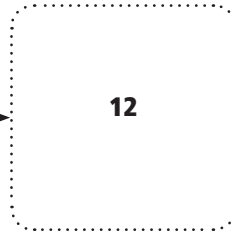
9



Does it look wrinkly or a little bit like a brain?

Yes

12



Morel

Does it look coral from the ocean?

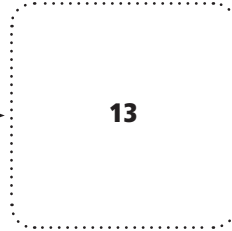
Yes

No

Does it look like the mushroom is wearing a lacy skirt?

Yes

13



Basket Stinkhorn

Does it look like a clump of little balls?

No

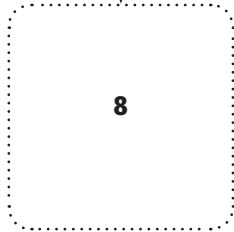
Is it shaped like a vase with ridges on the underside?

No

Yes

Yes

8



Puffballs

14



Chanterelle

