

Naming Business

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbofn9ROkGM>

Full English Transcript:

Before Carl Linnaeus came up with the way to name animals, they were given very long names that would describe what they looked like. An African ostrich, for example, might be called 'A large, feathered, long-necked, big-footed, backward-knee-bending bird'.

This same long and useless name could also have been used for the South American Rhea and so we simply would not have known which of these big birds we were actually talking about.

Linnaeus was into the business of naming living things so that we can recognise what they are. By being able to identify living things, we can work out how they are related to each other through a distant relation.

For example, each and every one of us is given the first and a second name. Your first name identifies who you are whilst your second family name identifies who you are related to.

Since Linnaeus, many other scientists are still actively working today to name as many living things as possible; partly so we can understand how all life on Earth has changed over a long long long period of time.

On Linnaeus's mission to name, he decided we should be given the most fitting one of them all: Homo sapiens. which means wise man. Homo sapiens is our first name and identifies us from all other living things as human beings.

The name Hominidae is our family name. This name connects us to one of our closest living relatives: the orangutan, which also has the family name Hominidae.

We are in the same family as these fuzzy, orange, tree-climbers because we have many of the same characteristics, such as opposable thumbs that allow us to hold onto things.

Two separate families of living things that look very different to each other can share a common ancestor to which they're both related. This is a bit like how you and your odd looking cousin may look nothing like each other but will share grandparents on one side of your family.

Therian mammal is the name given to a group of animals that are warm-blooded and give birth to live young such as elephants, rodents and whales. Another group of animals called the reptiles are all cold-blooded and lay eggs such as snakes, lizards and crocodiles. Both of these very different looking groups, reptiles and therian mammals, share a common ancestor that lived over 300 million years ago called a basal amniote.

This animal was both warm-blooded like a mammal and laid eggs like a reptile.

Linnaeus came up with a way to name animals as he believed that it was the responsibility of humans to discover name and understand all living things on Earth but things aren't always easy and naming can be a tricky business.

Take the Platypus for example they have webbed feet and a bill like a duck, fur like a mole and lay eggs like a reptile. Those poor, confused Platypuses!