

Describing a specimen

Example 1 *Bufo melanostictus*



Hints

1. Mention the common English name as well as the scientific name of the specimen;
2. Try to classify the specimen as much as you can (e.g., PCOFGS);
3. Give a brief external morphological description of the specimen; and
4. Finish the paragraph with a concluding remark.

Description

The supplied specimen is a toad belonging to the species *Bufo melanostictus*. It is a tetrapod vertebrate that belongs to the phylum Chordata, class Amphibia, order Anura (=Salientia) and family Bufonidae. It has a triangular head with prominent eyes, a pair each of parotid glands and tympanum (ear drums). It has numerous warts on the dorsal side of the body. Its hind limbs are larger and stronger than the forelimbs. The forelimbs bear four digits each whereas the each hind limb has five digits. The feet consist of elongated digits that are united by webs. Toad is an amphibian animal because a part of its life-cycle (*i.e.* the tadpole stage) is spent in water, even though adult toads are terrestrial.

Example 2 *Naja naja*



Description

The given specimen is an Indian cobra belonging to the species *Naja naj*. It is a vertebrate animal in which the limbs are secondarily lost. The snake belongs to the phylum Chordata, class Reptilia, order Squamata, sub-order Ophidia and family Elapidae. Its body is divisible into head, trunk and an elongated tail. The whole body is covered with smooth oblique scales. The colour of the body is brown (or blackish in older adults). The head is not differentiated from the neck and behind the head the snake bears a distinct hood that has 'spectacle' mark on it. The hood is formed by the expansion of the neck and cervical ribs. Cobra is a deadly poisonous snake whose venom is neurotoxic in action.