

Lesson 3 · living-things

What Do Living Things Do?

Lesson at a glance

Hold up a snail in a tub beside a toy car and ask the 1st class which is alive and how they can tell. After modelling the three signs of life, groups rotate three stations comparing a living thing with an object — snail and stone, sprouting bean and toy car, plant and teddy. They notice and chat, then record on the ComparisonTable journal page what the living thing does that the object never can. Close with a display-only science-talk drawing out grow, need food and water, move.

Learning objectives

- Notice that living things grow, need food and water, and move or change
- Compare a living thing with a non-living object and say what is different

Before the bell – prep

Set up three station tables before the bell: a snail or woodlouse in a clear tub with a stone; a sprouting bean in a jar with a toy car; a potted plant or picked daisy with a teddy or pencil case. Start the bean a week or two ahead so a shoot is showing. A woodlouse from under a flowerpot works if a snail is awkward to find.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
garden snail or woodlouse in a clear tub	1	class	outdoors	a slow minibeast such as a worm in a tub of damp soil
sprouting bean in a clear jar	1	class	classroom	a small potted plant or cress already growing on the windowsill
small potted plant or picked daisy	1	class	outdoors	a leafy houseplant from the classroom
smooth stone	1	class	outdoors	a pebble from the yard
toy car	1	class	classroom	any small push toy
teddy or pencil case (non-living object)	1	class	classroom	any everyday classroom object
magnifier	1	group	school kit	look closely with the eyes
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	classroom	plain paper folded into two columns



Lesson 3

Safety watch-point

Handle the snail or woodlouse gently, return all minibeasts outdoors at the end, and have everyone wash their hands after the stations.



Teaching moves

- **What Living Things Do:** Read each table row aloud and point at the snail then the car as you go. Model the noticing out loud — 'I predict the snail will move... yes, it slid and left a trail; the car stayed still until I pushed it.' Stress that a living thing moves **BY ITSELF**, grows, and needs food and water.
- **Watch and Compare at the Stations:** Move groups round in turn, about five minutes each. At every station ask 'What is it doing? Could the stone or car ever do that?' Watch for children pointing out movement, the bean shoot growing, and the object staying exactly the same. Have groups whisper-predict before they look closely.
- **List What the Living Thing Does:** Pupils fill the ComparisonTable page — living thing, object, what's different — drawing or writing. Run the make-sense as a sorting talk: call out 'moves by itself, gets bigger, needs a drink, stays the same' and ask which side each belongs on. Keep it oral and on paper, never typed.
- **What Makes a Living Thing Living?:** Display-only science-talk: draw out the three big signs together — living things grow, need food and water, and move or change. Revoice answers so everyone hears them, then ask the class to spot a living thing in the school garden on the way out.



What it should show

Children will typically notice the snail moving on its own, the bean shoot getting taller and the plant needing water, while the stone, car and teddy stay exactly the same. Most will name movement first; some will need prompting to spot growth and the need for food and water. Affirm 'it moves' then steer to all three signs together.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **Children think anything that moves is alive — the toy car, the wind.** — At the bean-and-car station, push the car so it rolls then stops. Ask 'did it move by itself?' Contrast with the snail that slides on its own. Stress a living thing moves by itself **AND** grows **AND** needs food and water.
- **Children think the bean or plant isn't alive because it isn't moving right now.** — Point at the bean shoot and ask 'how did it get this tall?' Show that growing is one of the special living-thing jobs, even when something stays in one place.



Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a simple yes/no choice at each station — 'does it move? does it stay the same?' • Sit with the teacher-table group and point to the living thing and the object as they answer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask children to whisper-predict what the snail will do next before they watch. • Prompt 'what does it need to stay alive?' to draw out food and water as well as movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them to name a living thing in the classroom or garden and say which three jobs it does. • Have fast finishers explain why the toy car isn't alive even though it can move.

Cross-curricular hook

Tie to the school garden in Geography — children spot a living thing on the way out and name one thing it does that an object cannot.