

living-things

What plants and animals need outdoors

Lesson at a glance

Hold up the class potted plant and invite quick guesses about what it needs to keep growing. Use the plant interactive in display mode to point out roots, leaf and pot, then show the robin and snail photo cards. Name the three needs cards — water, food, safe place — and match them to plant, robin and snail one at a time on the carpet. Finish by pinning the nine needs cards under Plant, Robin and Snail headings to build the class wall chart, with a short gardener and vet mime.

Learning objectives

- Name water, food and a safe place as things plants and animals need
- Help build a class picture chart of what living things outdoors need

Before the bell – prep

Place one potted plant where all can see it. Print the garden-animal photo cards (robin, snail) and nine needs picture cards (three each of water, food, safe place). Clear a small wall or noticeboard strip and pin Plant, Robin, Snail heading pictures ready.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
small potted plant (flowering if possible)	1	class	classroom	a pot of grass, herbs, or a leafy cutting in a jar of water
garden-animal photo cards (robin, snail)	1	class	classroom	simple drawings of a robin and a snail on card
needs picture cards (water, food, safe place)	9	class	classroom	nine sticky notes with simple water-drop, leaf and nest sketches (three of each)
heading pictures for the wall chart (plant, robin, snail)	1	class	classroom	three sticky labels written Plant, Robin, Snail
sticky tack or pins for the noticeboard	1	class	classroom	masking tape loops

Safety watch-point

No tasting the plant; gentle hands on the pot only. Wash hands after any touch of soil.

**Teaching moves**

- **Looking at a plant:** Open the plant interactive on the IWB in display mode only — children do not drag. Point to roots on the board, then on the real pot: roots drink water. Hold a leaf toward the light and tap the pot soil as its safe place. Do not teach stem or flower names today.
- **Look and wonder:** Hold the pot, then the robin card, then the snail card. Keep talk short: one notice each. Prompt with where the robin might drink or snack and where the snail might hide. Accept every idea — you are priming needs, not filling the chart yet.
- **What do they need?:** Whole class on the carpet with one shared set of three needs cards. Show Water, Food, Safe place and have children echo each word. Then run plant, robin, snail in turn with the same three questions. Model plant food carefully: leaves make food with light — plants do not munch lunch. Prompt safe place with ‘Where does it sleep or hide?’
- **Our needs chart:** Face the wall strip with Plant, Robin, Snail headings up. Children help pin one water, one food and one safe-place card under each. Draw out puddles/bugs/hedge for the robin and damp places/soft leaves/under a stone for the snail. Close with a quick gardener watering mime and a gentle vet check mime — no suggestion that wild animals go to a surgery.
- **Make-sense and tidy:** Point at the wall chart and revoice water, food, safe place while children show one, two, three fingers. Praise careful looking. Return the plant to a safe shelf, bag the loose cards, leave the chart up if space allows, and send anyone who touched soil to wash hands.

**What it should show**

Most infants will name or point to water and food first for the robin and snail; safe place often needs the prompt ‘Where does it sleep or hide?’ For the plant, expect ‘water’ and ‘soil/pot’ readily — gently steer ‘it eats soil’ back to roots drink water and leaves make food with light. Success is helping place cards and naming at least one need per living thing.

**Misconceptions & interventions**

- **‘Plants eat soil’ or ‘the plant munches lunch like us.’** — Point to the roots in the pot and a leaf toward the window: roots drink water; leaves help make food when light shines. They do not munch soil the way we eat lunch.
- **Children name food and water for animals but forget a safe place.** — Hold up the Safe place card and ask ‘Where does the robin sleep?’ or ‘Where does the snail hide?’ — nest in a hedge, under a stone or leaf.



Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Child points to a needs card while you voice the sentence for them. • Stay beside the teacher with the shared cards and echo the three need words.	• Child places the matching needs card under the heading and says one short idea (e.g. 'robin drinks from a puddle').	• Confident talkers add one extra idea, such as the robin hiding in the hedge when it rains, still using only the cards on the carpet.

Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: children echo need words and build short 'it needs...' sentences while pinning the class chart.