

materials

What is it made of?

Lesson at a glance

Open with one everyday spoon or wooden block and ask what it is made of. Model the word material with five live samples (wood, plastic, metal, paper, fabric) while Junior Infants look and listen. Run two short classroom hunt bursts; each child brings one favourite find to a low sharing tray and names its material. Close by pointing and naming materials on the tray and on the classroom door.

Learning objectives

- Touch and name wood, plastic, metal, paper or fabric on everyday classroom objects
- Bring one favourite find to a sharing tray and say what it is made of

Before the bell – prep

Gather five samples the day before: wooden block, plastic cup or lid, metal spoon, paper scrap, fabric scrap. Clear a low central table for the sharing tray and set out chunky magnifiers. Keep samples out of sight until Look and Wonder. Mark hunt boundaries (no climbing; cupboards closed).

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
sample objects for teacher model (wooden block, plastic cup, metal spoon, paper scrap, fabric square)	1	class	classroom	any five everyday classroom objects of different materials
collecting tray or shallow basket	1	class	classroom	cardboard box lid or large plate
sticky labels	10	class	classroom	small paper scraps and tape
chunky magnifying glass	1	group	school kit	look closely with eyes only

Safety watch-point

Gentle touches only; nothing near mouths; magnifiers held with two hands; no running or climbing; teacher cupboards stay closed.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold up only the spoon or wooden block. Ask What do you think this is made of? Accept every guess warmly, then move on — do not name all five materials yet.
- **Look and Wonder:** Children stay seated. Model one full cycle with the wooden block: I wonder... I notice... I think it is wood. Then a rapid 10–15 second name-and-feel pass for plastic, metal, paper and fabric. Revoice property words into material names: Yes, it feels hard. The material is metal.
- **Materials Hunt:** Point to the sharing tray and boundaries. Run two bursts of about six minutes: first wood or plastic only, freeze and name; then metal, paper or fabric, each child keeping one favourite. Circulate with What does it feel like? What do you think it is made of?
- **Share Our Finds:** Batch by material or mix full shares with point-and-name so 20–28 children finish in about six minutes. Group like materials on the tray. If a child says it's a spoon, revoice Yes, a spoon made of metal.
- **Look at Our Tray:** Oral make-sense only — no writing. Point and name wood, plastic, metal, paper and fabric on the tray, then the classroom door. Stay on naming; smile and revoice if a child offers a job idea unprompted.

What it should show

Most Junior Infants name wood and plastic confidently from the tray finds. Metal and fabric often need a feel prompt (cool and shiny; soft like clothes). Success look-fors: point to a find and name its material; say one material word from today's list; name the door's material with support.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Children say an object is hard or red instead of naming the material.** — Affirm the observation, then revoice: Yes, it feels hard. The material it is made of is metal. Hold the sample and repeat the material word together.
- **Children name the object (it's a spoon) rather than what it is made of.** — Reply Yes, a spoon made of metal. Point to the material group on the sharing tray so they hear object and material side by side.



Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Hunt beside you and choose from two objects you offer: Is this wood or plastic? • If they point but do not speak, revoice You found the wood — well done! and invite a nod or whisper.	• During a burst, prompt a second feel word before they name the material (hard/soft, shiny, bendy).	• Confident pairs try to name more than one material in a burst before choosing a favourite for the tray.

Cross-curricular hook

Links to oral language: full-sentence shares (A sock made of fabric) and listening turns on the sharing tray.