

materials

The right material for the job

Lesson at a glance

Open by holding up ordinary paper as a pretend umbrella in Irish rain and ask if it would keep anyone dry. Model choosing soft fabric over hard wood for a teddy and saying a short why. After a teacher water-check on paper versus bag plastic, groups feel tray samples, then match four job cards (umbrella, teddy, window, bag) to the best material and say their reason. Close with a quick oral share and a child-language chorus: soft, see-through, keeps rain out, strong.

Learning objectives

- Match a job picture to a material that suits it
- Handle materials and choose one for a job with a simple reason
- Say why a material is a good fit for a named job

Before the bell – prep

Set one tray per group with fabric, wood block, paper, opaque bag plastic, clear wallet plastic, metal spoon or lid, and cardboard. Print four job picture cards per group; keep face down. Ready one cup of water and a paper towel for the teacher water check only.



**Materials**

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
materials tray samples (soft fabric scrap, clear see-through plastic from a document wallet, opaque waterproof plastic scrap from a carrier bag or tablecloth, paper, wood block or offcut, metal spoon or smooth lid, cardboard scrap)	1	group	classroom	any clean household scraps with the same properties (old t-shirt, food-bag plastic, cereal-box card)
job picture cards (umbrella, teddy, window, bag)	1	group	classroom	four sticky notes with a large simple drawing of each job and the short job line from step 4 teacher notes for you to read aloud
shallow tray or box lid for samples	1	group	classroom	a clean cardboard lid or lunchbox
sheet of ordinary paper for the hook	1	class	classroom	any scrap paper
small cup of water and paper towel for teacher water check	1	class	classroom	a few drops from a water bottle and a tissue

Safety watch-point

Nothing in mouths; keep small scraps on trays. Teacher only holds the water cup — one drop each, wipe spills straight away.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold one sheet of paper like an umbrella, smile, and ask if it would work in the rain. Take two or three quick answers only. Do not tip out the materials trays yet.
- **Materials that suit the job:** Hold up fabric scrap and wooden block so children can see and feel the contrast. Ask which suits a soft teddy and let them call out a short why. Model once: feel wood (hard), feel fabric (soft), choose fabric because a teddy needs to be soft to cuddle. Board labels suits / why are for you only.
- **Feel the materials:** Gather the class close. Drop one drop of water on paper and on opaque bag plastic so the soak versus water-sitting-on-top is clear; wipe straight away. Name keeps water out / lets water in. Send groups to trays and prompt one property at a time: soft or hard, see-through, would it keep rain out. Give metal and wood a spoken role so they are not stranded samples.
- **Match the job:** Read each job line aloud before groups start. Cue once: umbrella wants the bag plastic that keeps water out; bag can use cardboard so groups do not fight over one scrap; spoon or lid may stay on the tray. Visit groups asking Why that one? and revoice strong reasons. Stage cards one at a time for less confident groups.
- **Share our reasons:** Invite two or three groups to hold up one match and say their why. Draw out: keeps water out, soft, see-through, strong. Weave one short Nature of STEM line tied to a card they hold: makers pick the material that suits each job best.

What it should show

Expect umbrella with opaque waterproof plastic, teddy with soft fabric, window with clear plastic, bag with cardboard (or sturdy plastic). Metal and wood may stay unused. A group putting paper on the umbrella is a talk chance, not a scolding — revisit the water check. Accept any match if the child gives a real property reason.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **I pick this one because it's my favourite colour / the prettiest.** — Point back to the job card: Does that help the umbrella keep us dry? Prompt a feel or water property instead of colour.
- **Heavy things are always best.** — Hold up the teddy card and the soft fabric: soft matters more than heavy for cuddling. Ask which property the job needs.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Stage job cards one at a time and offer the stem: I chose this because it is... so the child can point and finish with soft, strong, or keeps water out.	• Ask Why that one? at each card and prompt a second property word if they only name a colour.	• Invite one material that would be a poor fit for a job and a short why it would not work.



Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: children practise a short because reason when they justify each material choice to the group.

