

materials

Natural or man-made?

Lesson at a glance

Open with a wooden spoon and a plastic spoon and ask where each material came from, without naming the groups yet. Model the origin test with a feather and foil, then groups handle a mixed tray and sort samples onto natural and man-made sheets, parking unsure items in the gap. Drive the sorting-tree interactive on the IWB to check the class sort, then pupils draw one natural and one man-made sample in the Investigation Journal before a short display-only talk.

Learning objectives

- Sort materials into natural and man-made groups with a simple reason
- Say whether familiar everyday objects are natural or man-made

Before the bell – prep

Night before, bag mixed trays (not pre-sorted): wood block/peg, wool scrap, stone, cotton ball or fabric, feather, plastic lid, foil square, polyester/fleece scrap, paperclip. Cut two large labelled sheets per group (natural / man-made) and leave a gap between. Cue the sorting-tree interactive on the IWB.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
wooden spoon (or wood sample)	1	class	classroom	a wooden peg or lolly stick
plastic spoon (or plastic sample)	1	class	classroom	a clean plastic bottle lid
mixed sorting tray of samples (wood, wool, stone, cotton, feather, plastic lid, foil, polyester or fleece scrap, paperclip)	1	group	classroom	photo cards plus two or three real items from outdoors, clean recycling or home
two large sheets of paper labelled natural and man-made	2	group	classroom	masking-tape circles on the table, or one shared pair of PE hoops at the front if space allows
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	classroom	a plain page folded in half labelled natural and man-made

**Safety watch-point**

Treat feathers and wool gently; wash hands after handling wool, feathers or dusty stones. Pack samples away carefully at the end.

**Teaching moves**

- **Getting Started:** Hold up the wooden and plastic spoons only. Ask where each came from, take two or three ideas, then clarify you mean the material (wood from a tree, plastic made by people), not who shaped the spoon.
- **Natural or man-made?:** Project the short board definitions. Model aloud with a feather (I wonder / I predict / I look / I think — natural from an animal), then foil the same way as man-made. Head off soft-equals-natural before trays go out.
- **Handle and notice:** Give each group one mixed tray so every child handles two or three items. Circulate and revoice touch clues: rough wood like a trunk, shiny foil, soft wool. Ask: Does this grow? Did people make it?
- **Sort: natural or man-made:** Groups sort onto the two labelled sheets with a gap for not-sure. When foil or a paperclip appears, say once: people dig metal up then make it into foil or clips — man-made today. Park paper in the gap if stuck. One child per group shares an item and a reason.
- **Sort on the board:** Run the sorting-tree interactive in explore mode. Read the origin question, drag each card as the class decides, and fold in Do you agree? Why? Hold up the fleece scrap when polyester appears so the board word matches what they felt.
- **Record in your journal:** On the Investigation Journal page, each pupil draws one natural and one man-made sample from their tray and adds a word if they can. Offer the stems orally: This is natural because... / This is man-made because...
- **Make sense together:** Display-only talk: revoice that natural comes from plants, animals or the ground and man-made is made by people. Briefly revisit metal if needed. Optional noticing: spot one of each at home tonight — paper only, no digital task.

What it should show

Most groups place wood, wool, stone, cotton and feather on natural, and plastic, foil, polyester and paperclip on man-made. Paper may sit in the gap or go with natural (from trees) — both fine for 1st class. Odd man-made-on-natural piles usually mean children sorted by soft/hard or by object shape; return them to where the material came from.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **Soft things are natural and hard things are man-made.** — Hold wool beside polyester fleece and stone beside hard plastic. Both pairs feel alike, but one of each pair grew or came from the ground and one was made by people — origin is the test, not feel.
- **Foil and paperclips are natural because metal comes from the ground.** — Agree metal is dug up, then say once: people make it into thin shiny foil or clips, so today we sort them with man-made. Park longer manufacturing talk.
- **If people shaped it (a wooden spoon, a wool jumper), it must be man-made.** — Point back to the spoon hook: we care what the material is made of, not who cut or knitted the object. Wood and wool still came from a tree and a sheep.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Sort two clear items with you first (e.g. wood and plastic lid) using the stems before joining the full tray. • Record by drawing only; scribe one word label if needed.	• Give one oral reason per sorted item using Does it grow? or Did people make it? • Help clear one unsure item from the gap during the board sort.	• Add one classroom object from the shelf and justify natural or man-made to the group. • Early finishers draw one extra object they can see from their seat in the journal.

Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: practise because-reasons when sharing one sorted item with the class.