

living-things

Food gives us energy to grow

Lesson at a glance

Open with a quick hands-up wonder about what keeps pupils going from morning until home time. Introduce energy as the go-power food gives, then name the five needs: food, water, air, sleep and care. Groups place activity cards on a single mat labelled Food gives me energy for this and say why — including quiet jobs such as reading. Act out running, thinking and playing freezes, build a class poster of the five needs, then record food plus one other need in the Investigation Journal.

Learning objectives

- Identify food as a source of energy for growing, playing and thinking
- Name basic human needs that help us grow and thrive (food, water, air, sleep, care)

Before the bell – prep

Print one set of eight activity cards per group and the five needs cards. Prepare one large mat or hoop per group labelled Food gives me energy for this. Stick poster paper titled What we need to grow and stay well on the wall with space under each card. Clear a little floor space for the freeze game.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
activity picture cards (running, reading, football, thinking, climbing, drawing, skipping, listening)	1	group	classroom	eight sticky notes with the activity names written on them
needs picture cards (food, water, air, sleep, care)	1	class	classroom	five large sticky notes with the need names and a simple sketch
poster sheet for the class needs poster	1	class	classroom	use a clear section of whiteboard or noticeboard space instead of a sheet
markers	1	class	classroom	write straight onto the poster or board
sorting mat or hoop label (Food gives me energy for this)	1	group	classroom	a sheet of A3 paper with the label written at the top
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	classroom	a plain page with space to name needs and write or draw why each helps
pencils	1	pupil	classroom	crayons or markers

Safety watch-point

During Act out the energy, pupils stay in their own space; no racing across the room. Keep movements small and class-friendly.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Stand at the board and take three or four quick hands-up ideas only. Accept food, sleep, water, rest or play without correcting yet — the lesson will gather them into clear needs. Keep activity and needs cards nearby but unhandled.
- **Food gives us energy:** Project one short line at a time on the IWB: energy meaning, then the question, then needs meaning, then the five needs. Say the worked model aloud (I wonder / I predict / I think) without projecting it as a script. Head off the sporty-only idea by asking whether the brain needs energy when sitting still and thinking.
- **Where food energy helps:** Model Card 4 (Thinking) with the whole class first — place it on the mat and name that quiet jobs count too. Then groups pick cards one at a time, place each, and say why. Circulate; if a group sets a quiet job aside, ask whether the body still needs fuel when reading or listening. Aim for at least three justified cards per group including one quiet job; drop the whole-class share first if time is tight.
- **Act out the energy:** Keep movements small: march on the spot for running, gentle temple taps for thinking, quiet clap for playing — about 10 seconds each, then freeze. After each freeze take two partner whispers linking to breakfast, lunch, water or sleep. Revoice that food fuels body and brain; do not invite ranking of foods or special running-versus-thinking snacks.
- **Needs to grow and stay well:** Reveal one needs card at a time. Take one short answer per need, stick the card, and write a brief phrase under it yourself. Spend a little more talk on food and sleep; keep water, air and care to one crisp reason each so all five stay visible within about six minutes.
- **Record in your journal:** Keep the class poster and the stem ... helps me grow because... visible. Circulate with Name the need. Why does it help you grow or stay well? Minimum product is food plus one other need, each with a short reason; drawing plus a few words is fine. Fast finishers add a third need or a small picture — no device task.
- **What keeps us going:** Display-only close. Take three partner shares naming one need and how it helps through a school day. Revoice the two big ideas, then run a quick oral exit check: point to the poster and have half the class mime the need you name, then swap. Leave the poster up if you can.

What it should show

Every activity card belongs on the food-energy mat, including quiet jobs such as reading, thinking, drawing and listening. Pupils name food as fuel for body and brain, not only for sport. On the poster they offer one simple reason per need. In the Investigation Journal most 2nd-class pupils record food plus one other need (e.g. sleep helps my body rest and grow) with a short because reason.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **Only running, football and other sporty jobs need energy — sitting still to read or think does not.** — Hold up the Thinking or Listening card and place it on the mat yourself: even when I am sitting still, food helps my brain think. Ask the group whether the body still needs fuel for quiet jobs.
- **Sleep and care are extras; only food and water really matter for growing.** — Point to the Sleep and Care cards on the poster and revoice that all five needs work together — sleep helps the body rest, repair and grow, and care keeps children safe, calm and well.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Offer the board stems Food gives me energy to... and This helps me grow because...; accept drawing plus a few words for food and one other need.	• Prompt pairs to justify at least one quiet job card in a full short sentence and to name when that need helps in the school day.	• Confident groups can also say whether a job needs a lot of energy or a little, still keeping food as the source; fast finishers add a third need on the journal page.

Cross-curricular hook

Links to SPHE healthy living — naming daily routines (breakfast, water at break, sleep) that help children through a school day.