

living-things

A close-looking nature walk

Lesson at a glance

Open by holding up one outdoor find so Junior/Senior Infants look with bare eyes, then slide a magnifier over it and invite two or three new details. Model how to hold a magnifier near the object and how to use a looking window, then hand tools out before lining up. On a short garden walk of two or three stops, each child looks closely at one leaf, bark, petal or tiny creature. Back inside, they draw that find on the Investigation Journal DrawingRecord page and share one detail orally.

Learning objectives

- Use a magnifier or looking window to look closely at something outdoors
- Describe one close-up detail they noticed (colour, shape, texture)
- Draw something they looked at up close outdoors

Before the bell – prep

Gather one demo find (leaf, bark or flower head), a class set of magnifiers, and looking windows (card frames or clean toilet-roll tubes). Pre-gather a shared nature tray of leaves, bark and petals for wet weather. Have DrawingRecord pages and crayons ready before you return indoors.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
chunky plastic magnifiers	1	pupil	school kit	share one magnifier between two, or look very closely with eyes only (noses nearly touching the object)
looking windows (simple card windows or empty toilet-roll tubes)	1	pupil	classroom	fingers making a looking window (thumbs and fingers in a circle)
Investigation Journal pages	1	pupil	classroom	plain A4 paper for each child to draw on
crayons or colouring pencils	1	pupil	classroom	any classroom drawing tools
nature tray finds for wet-weather indoor fallback (mixed safe leaves, bark pieces, petals from the school yard)	1	class	outdoors/nature	the single demo find from Getting Started, shared at the carpet if no tray is ready

**Safety watch-point**

Stay with the group inside the agreed boundary. No berries, leaves or finds in mouths. Gentle hands with minibeasts; wash hands on return before drawing.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold one outdoor find up for bare-eye looking, then place the magnifier over it. Ask two or three children what new detail they notice. Keep it short and curious — no tools out yet.
- **Looking Closely:** With the real object in view, model holding the magnifier near the find (not like a monocle) and holding a looking window still over one small patch. Say the worked looking cycle aloud. Hand out magnifiers and looking windows only at the end of this beat so the walk is ready to go.
- **Our Nature Walk:** Count the class, agree the boundary, and point to example finds before the door. Run two or three short stops, not a long loop. Prompt colour, shape, smooth or bumpy. Protect the 8–9 minutes of looking time — coats, count and return should take only 4–5 minutes total.
- **Draw What You Saw:** Hands already washed. Give each child the DrawingRecord page and crayons. Circulate with: show me the part you saw with the magnifier; what colour; where were the lines or bumps. Celebrate touch talk orally, but steer the page to a seeable detail.
- **What Did Close Looking Help Us Notice?:** Invite three or four children to hold up their drawing and name one concrete detail. Revoice with looking closely and the park-ranger link. Display-only talk — no writing. Celebrate opposite details on similar finds.

What it should show

Most children will draw a recognisable leaf, bark, petal or minibeast and mark at least one detail — veins, spots, tiny hairs, bumps or a shell curve. Some offer only a colour wash; affirm and ask them to point to one bit they saw up close. A child who draws a whole tree or path usually glanced rather than used the tool — gently send them back to one small find in memory.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **The magnifier makes the leaf grow bigger.** — Hold the leaf beside the magnified view and say gently: it only looks bigger; the leaf stays the same size. Let them check with bare eyes again.
- **I have to pick lots of things or bring something back to class.** — Before the door, restate one find only, gentle hands, leave it where it is. Check pockets and trays on return and return any minibeast outside.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Pair with a confident talker and offer starters: I can see... It feels... • Accept a simple shape plus one colour as a full DrawingRecord try	• Prompt a second detail on the same object rather than a new place • Invite an emergent label (a letter or short word like leaf) if ready	• Ask them to show the class which part only the magnifier or looking window revealed • Invite them to compare two details on the same find (e.g. smooth edge, bumpy middle)

Cross-curricular hook

Links to oral language and Visual Arts — children name one detail and show it in a simple observational drawing.