

technology

Screens and no screens

Lesson at a glance

Hold up a tablet and a wooden spoon and ask which has a screen children can look at. Spread safe helpers on a shared tray; children point out screens, then small groups sort objects into two labelled hoops (has a screen / no screen) while the class agrees or challenges each placement. Six home pictures (washing machine, microwave, kettle) are sorted orally on the board. Children draw one helper in each group on the Investigation Journal page and pair-share one screen helper and one without.

Learning objectives

- Sort helpers into has a screen and no screen
- Talk about one helper with a screen and one without

Before the bell – prep

Set two floor or low-table hoops with picture labels: has a screen · no screen. Fill one shared tray with safe real helpers (class tablet or toy phone, wooden spoon, brush, remote) plus picture cards for a microwave and washing machine. Stack Investigation Journal pages ready to hand out.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
sorting hoops with simple labels (has a screen · no screen)	2	class	classroom	two large loops of yarn or two trays
tray of safe everyday helpers (tablet or toy phone, remote control, wooden spoon, hairbrush or paintbrush, small bell, fabric scrap with a zip)	1	class	classroom	picture cards only if real objects are scarce
picture cards for helpers hard to bring (microwave, television, analogue clock)	1	class	provided printable	simple hand-drawn picture cards on scrap paper
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	provided printable	a blank page folded in half labelled screen and no screen
crayons	1	pupil	classroom	coloured pencils



Safety watch-point

Use only safe, classroom-appropriate helpers. Supervise gentle handling of the tablet or toy phone; no glass screens passed hand-to-hand without you nearby.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold only the tablet (or toy phone) and the wooden spoon — keep the tray out of sight. Ask the one question: which has a screen we can look at? Take a few points; do not explain the sorting rule yet.
- **Look for screens:** Spread a few safe helpers on the tray. Model once: tablet — flat shiny part that lights up, screen; spoon — no flat light-up face, no screen. Invite two or three children to point and say what they notice. Keep it short and oral; one look-for only.
- **Sort the helpers:** Model a full sort first (tablet → screen hoop; brush → no-screen; remote with buttons but no light-up face → no-screen). Then rotate small groups of about four minutes: each child chooses one object, says where it goes, and places it. Keep watchers in with Do you agree? Why? If the sort stalls, cut the tray to six clear objects and sort whole-class on the carpet.
- **Screens at home:** Five brisk minutes, whole class calling out. Push the washing machine and microwave — most have a little number screen, which surprises children who think screens are only for watching. The kettle can go either way; take both answers and ask what theirs looks like at home.
- **Show and draw:** Hand out the Investigation Journal page (has a screen · no screen). Children draw one helper in each group from the tray and hoops still in view. Circulate and ask each child to point and say This one has a screen or This one has no screen. Collect pages at the end.
- **Screens that help us:** Point to one sorted screen helper and one no-screen helper so the prompt stays concrete. Pair-share: name one of each. Revoice answers so every child hears clear examples. If talk dries up, name one familiar place yourself (shop till, doctor's screen) — do not ask Infants to invent places first.



What it should show

Most Infants place the tablet or toy phone in has-a-screen and the spoon, brush and button-only remote in no-screen. Washing-machine and microwave pictures often surprise them once they spot the number display. Affirm both kinds of helper. If a child puts a metal spoon or mirror in the screen hoop, redirect: a screen shows pictures, words or numbers when the helper is on.





Misconceptions & interventions

- **Any shiny surface is a screen — a metal spoon or a mirror counts.** — Hold the shiny object beside the tablet. Say a screen is the part that shows pictures, words or numbers when the helper is on; put the spoon or mirror firmly in the no-screen hoop.
- **Screens are only for watching things, so a washing machine or microwave has no screen.** — Point to the little number display on the picture. Ask what the numbers are telling us — that small light-up face is still a screen.
- **Buttons mean it has a screen, so a remote goes in the screen hoop.** — Name buttons briefly as small parts you press, then return to the one rule: no light-up face means no-screen hoop.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Sort beside you with only two clear objects (one screen, one no-screen); offer object stickers or let them copy from a real item still on the tray for the Journal drawing.	• Take a full turn at the tray: choose, say the reason aloud (it lights up / it is just a spoon), and place; point to one Journal drawing and name the group.	• Act as hoop checker and ask a friend why before agreeing; if finished early, draw a second helper on the back of the Journal page.

Cross-curricular hook

Ties to Aistear/oral language: children justify a sort aloud with a simple reason (it lights up / no screen).