

living-things

Sorting plants and animals with a reason

Lesson at a glance

Hold up a daisy and a robin card and wonder what belongs together. Name today's words — sort, plant, animal — then notice features on the ten nature photo cards. Model the plant/animal sort on the IWB picture-sort interactive before groups sort the same cards into real hoops, then re-sort the animals into has-legs and no-legs. Children draw both sorts on the Investigation Journal page and close by echoing that scientists sort living things to learn about them.

Learning objectives

- Sort living-thing cards into plants and animals and say the reason
- Do a second sort of animals into with legs and no legs
- Say the sorting reason for each sort in their own words

Before the bell – prep

Print one set of the ten nature photo cards per group the day before. Lay out two hoops per group with plant/animal labels ready, and keep a second pair of labels (has legs · no legs) to hand. Open the picture-sort interactive on the IWB before the bell.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
nature photo cards (daisy, oak tree, grass, bluebell, robin, frog, spider, ladybird, snail, worm)	1	group	provided printable	cut pictures of the same plants and animals from old magazines or simple drawings on scrap card
sorting hoops	2	group	classroom	two labelled trays or two large circles of string on the floor
picture label cards (plant, animal, has legs, no legs)	1	group	provided printable	sticky notes with a simple picture drawn for each group

Safety watch-point

Supervise floor work so hoops and cards stay clear of walkways; remind children not to put cards in mouths.

**Teaching moves**

- **Getting Started:** Hold up two contrasting printed cards (daisy and robin) so everyone can see. Ask what is the same and what is different. Keep it light — do not name the sorting rules yet; every guess is welcome.
- **Today's Words:** Read the three short lines on the board — sort, plant, animal — pointing to a real card for each. Stress the key point: when we sort, we always say why. Head off early that a snail is an animal even though it is slow and has a shell.
- **Look Carefully:** Spread one set face up on the carpet. Name all ten cards together before any sorting: daisy, oak tree, grass, bluebell, robin, frog, spider, ladybird, snail, worm. Ask only noticing questions — leaves, flowers, legs, shell, feelers.
- **Board Sort: Plant or Animal:** Open the picture-sort interactive in explore mode. Read Is it a plant or an animal? Invite children to call out; drag on their behalf until all ten are placed. A wrong hoop is a conversation — ask why it goes there. Watch for oak tree as plant and snail as animal.
- **Sort with the Hoops:** Groups of four to six with one card set and two hoops. Run plant/animal first until every child has said a reason at least once. Clear plants aside, swap labels to has legs · no legs, then sort the animals only. Do not run a second board sort after this.
- **Draw Our Sort:** Hand out the Investigation Journal page and pace three short beats: draw some plants and animals; mark which animals have legs and which have none; tell a partner why one group goes together. Circulate asking why did you put that one there? Scribe a reason if a child wants a label but cannot write it.
- **Why Did We Sort That Way?:** Ask one recall question at a time: first reason (plant or animal), then second reason (legs or no legs). Lead the class to echo once: Scientists sort living things into groups to learn about them, just like we did. Revoice one or two child reasons.

What it should show

Most infants place daisy, oak tree, grass and bluebell as plants, and the rest as animals, saying grows from the ground or can move. On the second sort, robin, frog, spider and ladybird go in has legs; snail and worm in no legs. Common mix-ups are snail as not-an-animal, oak tree as not-a-plant, and robin as no legs because of wings — affirm birds have two legs as well as wings.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **A snail is not an animal because it is slow or has a shell.** — Hold up the snail card beside the daisy. Ask: does it grow from the ground, or can it move? Agree it moves, so it is an animal — shell and all.
- **A tree is not a plant, or a bird has no legs because it has wings.** — Point to the oak-tree card and say trees grow from the ground, so they are plants. For the robin, point to the legs under the body — birds have two legs as well as wings, so it goes in has legs.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Let the child point to the hoop while you voice the reason aloud for them. • One clear sort plus a spoken reason on the Journal page is enough if drawing is slow.	• Prompt them to say the reason in a full short sentence before the card goes down. • Ask them to show a partner one plant and one animal with no legs from their drawing.	• Invite a third sorting idea aloud (What else could we sort by?) without a new hoop set. • Ask them to revoice a classmate's reason so the group hears the language again.

Cross-curricular hook

Links to oral language — children practise giving a short spoken reason for a group choice.