

What helps plants and animals flourish?

Lesson at a glance

Open with two real plants side by side — one strong and green, one left thirsty so leaves droop. Children notice colour, leaves and soil, then meet garden-animal cards (robin first). As a whole class they sort helper picture cards onto a wall chart under Helps them flourish or Does not help. Each child draws one helper and one non-helper in the Investigation Journal, tells a partner a need, then joins a short make-sense talk naming water, food, sunshine and shelter.

Learning objectives

- Notice the difference between a healthy plant and a thirsty plant
- Sort helper cards into things that help living things flourish and things that do not
- Name water, food, sunshine or shelter as something living things outdoors need

Before the bell – prep

Two to three days ahead, leave one plant unwatered so leaves droop and soil dries; water the other as usual. Print helper cards and garden-animal cards, clear wall space for two headings, and print Investigation Journal pages. Same-day fallback: a wilted cutting or clear photo pair beside one healthy plant.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
healthy potted plant	1	class	classroom	a sturdy cutting in a jar of water that has been kept in light
thirsty potted plant (left unwatered)	1	class	classroom	the same plant type shown after a dry spell, or a clear photo of a wilted plant next to a real healthy plant
garden-animal picture cards (robin, hedgehog, frog, worm)	1	class	provided printable	simple drawn animal pictures on scrap card using the step 2 card texts
helper picture cards (water, sunshine, food, shelter, dry soil, dark cupboard, nowhere safe to rest, rubbish)	1	class	provided printable	simple drawn helper pictures on scrap card using the step 3 card texts
wall or noticeboard space for the flourish chart	1	class	classroom	two labelled trays on a table as the two groups
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	provided printable	a folded page with two sides labelled helps / does not help for drawing

Safety watch-point

Wash hands after anyone touches the plants; wipe the tray. Supervise gentle handling so pots are not tipped or soil scattered.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Place the two plants on a front tray. Do not name helpers yet. Invite short call-outs about colour, leaves standing or drooping, and dry or moist soil. Ask only: What do you wonder about the floppy one? Keep the beat light.
- **Looking at plants and animals:** Spend unhurried whole-class time on the plant contrast so every child sees firm green leaves versus floppy dry ones. Point once to soil and roots and say plants drink water through their roots; class can echo roots. Hold the robin card (add hedgehog or frog if time) and ask what it might need outside — accept ideas, do not sort yet.
- **Sorting what helps them flourish:** Pin Helps them flourish (grow strong and stay healthy) and Does not help. Hold one helper card at a time so children see the picture first; they call out the side and a short reason while you place the card. After a few cards, glance back at the plants and link the thirsty one to the water card. If a card lands wrongly, ask the class whether it helps grow strong and stay healthy, then move it together.
- **Show and draw:** Hand out the Investigation Journal page with the wall chart still in full view. Children draw one thing from Helps, then one from Does not help. When most pencils are down, pair beside-you partners for a brief share of one need. Circulate and ask each child to name one helper aloud.
- **Make-sense talk:** Three short oral beats only: first needs from the chart; then you model gardener and farmer; then ask who else helps. Point back at both plants. Close with the shared class sentence: Living things need water, food, sunshine and shelter to flourish. Wash hands after plant touch and wipe the tray.

What it should show

Children notice the healthy plant is firm and green with moist soil and the thirsty one is floppy with dry soil. Expected sort: water, sunshine, food and shelter under Helps; dry soil, dark cupboard, nowhere safe to rest, and rubbish under Does not help. Most will name at least one of water, food, sunshine or shelter. Affirm short labels; gently restick any misplaced card with the class.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Children say plants eat food the same way animals do.** — Gently say plants use sunshine, water and air to make their own food in their leaves; animals eat food they find. Point to the sunshine and water cards, then the robin-with-worm card.
- **Children put Nowhere safe to rest under Helps because rain is water.** — Reply: water to drink helps; being stuck outside with nowhere to hide does not. Point to the missing nest or burrow on the card and move it to Does not help together.
- **Children think a dark cupboard is fine if the plant still has soil.** — Hold the dark-cupboard card beside the sunny plant picture and ask which plant can grow strong and green. Link back to the sunshine helper card.



Lesson 9

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Let the child point to a card or plant and say one word (water, sun, food, nest) while you place or revoice. • Sit them where the wall chart and both plants stay in clear view for the drawing step.	• Prompt a short reason after the sort call-out: It helps because... • Ask them to name which plant had water and which did not when you glance back at the tray.	• Invite a second helper or a link from a garden-animal card to shelter or food on the chart. • In partner share, ask them to name one need for a plant and one for an animal.

Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: children practise naming and giving a short reason while sorting and in the partner share.

