

materials

The right material for the job

Lesson at a glance

Open by holding up one sheet of paper as a pretend umbrella in Irish rain and ask if it would keep anyone dry. After a quick fabric-vs-wood teddy model, run a shared one-drop water check on paper and bag plastic, then send infants to trays to feel the scraps. Groups match four job picture cards (umbrella, teddy, window, bag) to a material and say a short why. Close with an oral share and a child-language chorus of the four job fits.

Learning objectives

- Match a job picture to a material that suits it
- Handle materials and choose one for a job with a simple reason
- Say why a material is a good fit for a named job

Before the bell – prep

Night before: print one set of four job picture cards per group and set one materials tray each with fabric, wood block, metal spoon/lid, cardboard, clear wallet plastic and opaque bag plastic (make the two plastics obviously different). Have one small water cup and paper towel ready for the shared drop demo only.

**Materials**

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
materials tray samples (soft fabric scrap, clear see-through plastic from a document wallet, opaque waterproof plastic scrap from a carrier bag or tablecloth, paper, wood block or offcut, metal spoon or smooth lid, cardboard scrap)	1	group	classroom	any clean household scraps with the same properties (old t-shirt, food-bag plastic, cereal-box card)
job picture cards (umbrella, teddy, window, bag)	1	group	provided printable	four sticky notes with a large simple drawing of each job and the short job line from step 4 teacher notes for you to read aloud
shallow tray or box lid for samples	1	group	classroom	a clean cardboard lid or lunchbox
sheet of ordinary paper for the hook	1	class	classroom	any scrap paper
small cup of water and paper towel for teacher water check	1	class	classroom	a few drops from a water bottle and a tissue

Safety watch-point

Nothing in mouths; small scraps stay on the tray. Teacher holds the water cup — one drop only — and wipe spills straight away.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold only one ordinary paper sheet. Pretend it is an umbrella, smile, and take two or three quick answers on whether it would work in the rain. Do not tip the materials trays yet.
- **Materials that suit the job:** Hold up a soft fabric scrap and a wooden block so the class can see and feel the contrast. Ask which is best for a soft teddy and let children point or call a short why. Model once out loud: feel wood (hard), feel fabric (soft), choose fabric because a teddy needs to be soft to cuddle. Board labels stay tiny — suits / why — and stay teacher-side.
- **Feel the materials:** Gather everyone close. Drop one water drop on ordinary paper and one on opaque bag plastic so the back row sees soak versus water sitting on top; wipe straight away and name keeps water out / lets water in. Send groups to pre-set trays. Circulate prompting one property at a time — soft or hard, can you see through it, would it keep rain out — and give metal and wood a spoken role so they are not stranded samples.
- **Match the job:** Hold up each job card and read the job line aloud before groups start. Say once that some materials stay on the tray on purpose and the spoon or lid can stay. Visit groups asking Why that one? and revoice strong reasons. For less confident groups, stage the cards one at a time starting with umbrella.
- **Share our reasons:** Invite two or three groups to hold up one match and say their why. Celebrate different good reasons that still fit the job. Weave one short Nature of STEM line tied to a card they hold: makers pick the material that suits each job best.
- **What we noticed and tidy:** Lead one short class chorus in full child language: soft for a teddy, see through for a window, keeps the rain out for an umbrella, strong for a bag. Optional once-only teacher echo of waterproof after keeps the rain out — do not put it on the pupil board. Then trays, stacked cards, floor scrap check.



What it should show

Expect umbrella → opaque bag plastic (keeps water out); teddy → soft fabric; window → clear wallet plastic (see-through); bag → cardboard or sturdy plastic (strong). Metal and wood often stay on the tray unless a child gives a real strong/smooth or hard/strong reason. Paper on the umbrella is a talk chance, not a scolding — re-show the water-check soak. Ordinary thin copy paper is a weak bag fit.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **I picked this one because it is my favourite colour / the prettiest.** — Point back to the job card: Does that help the umbrella keep us dry? Steer to a feel-word — soft, keeps water out, can see through it, strong.
- **Heavy things are always best.** — Hold up the teddy card and the fabric scrap: soft matters more than heavy for a cuddle. Ask which feels nicer to hold.
- **Paper will do for the umbrella because it is flat like a real one.** — Re-show the water-check samples side by side: paper lets water in; bag plastic keeps water sitting on top. Ask which one keeps Irish rain off us.



**Differentiation**

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Stage the four cards one at a time and let the child point while you supply the stem: I chose this because it is... • Stay at the teacher table for the umbrella match first using the two water-check scraps only.	• Ask Why that one? at each card and prompt one more feel-word if they only name a colour. • Invite them to name one material on the tray that would be a poor fit for the same job.	• Ask for one material that would be a poor fit and why, still using only the tray samples. • Let them give a real reason if they want metal or wood on a card (strong/smooth for lids; hard/strong for blocks) rather than leaving it stranded.

Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: rehearse the stem I chose this because it is... so every child practises a short spoken reason.