

living-things

What does it do, and how could we find out?

Lesson at a glance

Open by inviting three quick shares of ordinary classroom things pupils barely notice, then model STEM eyes aloud on a living find (plant, mossy wall or feeder): I notice... It does... How could we find out...? Lead one short fixed wonder walk of the school grounds so each pupil spots one ordinary thing doing a job. Back inside they record the three lines on the Investigation Journal page, then each pair pins one find-out question sticky to start the class question wall.

Learning objectives

- Notice something in the immediate school environment and say what it does
- Turn a wonder into a simple how-could-we-find-out question

Before the bell – prep

Walk a short fixed outdoor loop yourself and pre-spot 2–3 reliable finds (moss, tree root, bird feeder, weeds in a crack). Print one Investigation Journal page per pupil; gather clipboards, pencils and sticky notes. Clear a noticeboard strip for the question wall. Have an indoor corridor route ready if wet.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
clipboard	1	pupil	classroom	a piece of stiff cardboard with a bulldog clip
sticky notes	2	pupil	classroom	small paper rectangles and Blu Tack or masking tape
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	provided printable	a blank page ruled into three parts for notice, what it does, and find-out question
pencil	1	pupil	classroom	crayon or pen

Safety watch-point

Stay on the agreed path inside set boundaries; walk, don't run. No touching unknown plants, drains, litter or minibeasts. Handwash on return if anything outdoors was handled.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Keep three minutes light and conversational — three quick shares of ordinary things (sill plant, moss outside the window, bird feeder). Do not hand out clipboards or line up yet; curiosity first. Say once if asked: this course is STE; STEM eyes is the class catchphrase for careful noticing, and maths is not in scope today.
- **What are STEM eyes?:** Pupils watch in silence while you think aloud all three lines on a living find — plant, mossy wall or feeder: I notice... It does... How could we find out...? Do not take answers mid-model. Only after the full model invite one pupil to try the three lines on another ordinary object, then preview the walk, journal and question wall in two spoken sentences.
- **Wonder walk:** Lead the whole class as one line on the short fixed loop; pause at only one or two pre-spotted points. Hand out clipboard, journal page and pencil at the door. Circulate with: What exactly do you notice? What job does it do? What makes you wonder? One strong find each is enough — light jot outdoors if dry; careful writing waits until class. Start handwash and coats on re-entry.
- **Record what we noticed:** Settle with journals in about 3–4 minutes, then 6–7 minutes for one complete I noticed / It does / How could we find out on the page. Put the three sentence starters on the board. If settling drags, shorten to one strong drawing plus a spoken find-out question to a partner, then write the question only. Look for a real walk object, a plain-words job, and a question that could be watched, tried or asked later.
- **Our class question wall:** Sticky first at desks: each pair agrees one best find-out question on a single sticky (about 2 minutes). Invite two pupils to read their three lines and revoice ‘Could we watch it, try something gentle, or ask someone?’ Then send one pair or table row at a time to pin while the rest stay seated. If time slips, skip the second full share and go straight to rolling pin-up.
- **What we learnt:** Take two or three spoken answers only. Point at the wall and ask which ordinary thing STEM eyes helped them see, and which question might be watched over more than one day. Keep the year-long link light — questions can seed later work when they fit; not every note is investigated this week. Collect clipboards and leave the wall up.

What it should show

Most pupils name one real school-grounds find — moss, a root lifting a path, weeds in a crack, a feeder, a drain or gate latch — say what it does in plain words, and turn a wonder into a simple watch / try / ask question. Weak entries are generic guesses not from the walk, or ‘because it’s cool’ with no find-out path; send them back to name the object and one possible next step.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **STEM is only labs, robots or big machines — ordinary school things don't count.** — Point back at the living model find and revoice: STEM eyes start with careful noticing of everyday places and living things. Invite one more three-line try on a hinge or drain so they see hardware counts too.
- **'How could we find out?' means we must run a full investigation right now.** — Say clearly: today we collect good questions for the wall; watching, trying or asking comes later when a question fits. Celebrate a pinned sticky as success, not an unfinished experiment.
- **A wonder is wrong if we cannot answer it today.** — As notes go up, revoice that STEM eyes collect questions as well as answers, and a question can wait its turn on the year-long wall.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Talk partner first with board starters 'I noticed... / It does... / How could we find out...?'; accept a strong drawing plus a spoken question if writing stalls. • Sit them near you at a pre-spotted pause point so the find is concrete before they record.	• Prompt one extra detail about where the find was (path, yard, corridor) once the three lines are down. • Ask whether the question is best answered by watching, trying something gentle, or asking an adult.	• Stretch to a second find-out idea on the same object (watch over days and ask the caretaker). • During pin-up, invite them to sort their sticky aloud into watch / try / ask without opening a new full discussion.

Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: pairs rehearse the three spoken stems before writing, building clear noticing sentences for the question wall.