

living-things

A close-looking nature walk

Lesson at a glance

Open with one outdoor find held bare-eyed, then under a magnifier, so Junior Infants notice a new detail. Model holding the magnifier near the find and framing a patch with a looking window, then hand out tools. Take a short boundary walk with two or three stops: each child chooses one leaf, bark, petal or tiny creature and looks closely. Back inside, draw that find plus one detail on the Investigation Journal page, then hold drawings up and name what the magnifier showed that eyes alone missed.

Learning objectives

- Use a magnifier or looking window to look closely at something outdoors
- Describe one close-up detail they noticed (colour, shape, texture)
- Draw something they looked at up close outdoors

Before the bell – prep

Gather one interesting find (leaf, bark or flower head) and enough magnifiers plus looking windows (card frames or toilet-roll tubes; fingers-in-a-circle is the no-kit fallback). Pre-lay Investigation Journal pages and crayons on tables. For wet weather, pre-gather a nature tray of safe yard finds the night before.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
chunky plastic magnifiers	1	pupil	school kit	share one magnifier between two, or look very closely with eyes only (noses nearly touching the object)
looking windows (simple card windows or empty toilet-roll tubes)	1	pupil	classroom	fingers making a looking window (thumbs and fingers in a circle)
Investigation Journal pages	1	pupil	classroom	plain A4 paper for each child to draw on
crayons or colouring pencils	1	pupil	classroom	any classroom drawing tools
nature tray finds for wet-weather indoor fallback (mixed safe leaves, bark pieces, petals from the school yard)	1	class	outdoors/ nature	the single demo find from Getting Started, shared at the carpet if no tray is ready

Safety watch-point

Adult eyes on the whole group inside a short boundary. No berries or leaves in mouths; gentle hands only with minibeasts. Wash hands on return before drawing.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold your find bare-eyed first, then under the magnifier. Invite two or three children to name one new detail. Keep it under three minutes and do not hand out tools yet — hands free means eyes on the find.
- **Looking Closely:** Model with the real object in view: magnifier held near the find, not against the eye; looking window held still so only the framed patch is watched. Say the worked cycle aloud (wonder → look → notice). Hand out tools only at the end of this step so the walk starts ready.
- **Our Nature Walk:** Count, set a short boundary, and point to examples of allowed finds before the door. Two or three short stops — each child chooses one thing only. Prompt colour, shape, smooth or bumpy. Leave or return any minibeast gently. Budget ~8–9 minutes stopped looking, not marching.
- **Draw What You Saw:** Hands already washed; pages and crayons already out. Circulate with ‘Show me the part you saw with the magnifier’ and ‘Where were the lines, spots or bumps?’ One recognisable find plus one clear detail is enough — no box-hunting talk.
- **What did close looking show us?:** Drawings held up, three minutes, nothing written. Ask only what the magnifier showed that ordinary looking missed. If a child offers only a colour, warm-accept then nudge: ‘Was there anything tiny you only saw up close?’ Close by voicing: eyes are good; the magnifier shows what eyes miss.

What it should show

Most children will name and draw one outdoor find with at least one close detail — leaf veins or spots, bark cracks or bumps, a petal edge, or a shell curve. Affirm simple describing words (green, round, bumpy). Gently redirect anyone who only names a far-away colour with no close detail, or who drew something they did not actually look at.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **‘The magnifier makes the leaf grow bigger.’** — Hold the same leaf bare and under the magnifier side by side: ‘It only looks bigger — the leaf stays the same size.’ Let them feel it is unchanged.
- **Children rush from find to find or try to look at everything at once.** — Re-voice the one-find rule and model the looking window framing a single small patch. Early finishers add a second detail on the same object.



Lesson 6

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Pair with a confident talker and offer starters: 'I can see...' / 'It feels...' Teacher may hold the magnifier steady while the child looks.	• Prompt a second detail on the same find (lines and a spot) and a simple describing word for each.	• Invite an emergent label (a letter or short word like leaf) and ask them to point on their drawing to the bit only the magnifier showed.

Cross-curricular hook

Links to oral language: children rehearse simple describing words (colour, shape, texture) while looking and again when sharing drawings.

