

living-things

A close-looking nature walk

Lesson at a glance

Open by holding up one outdoor find (leaf, bark or flower head) for bare-eye looking, then place a magnifier over it so children name a new detail. Model how to hold a magnifier or looking window, hand out tools, and take a short boundary walk with two or three garden stops where each child looks at one find. Back inside, children draw that find plus one close-up detail on the Investigation Journal page, then three or four hold up drawings and name colour, shape or bumps.

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

Day before: gather one demo find, enough magnifiers and looking windows (card frames or clean toilet-roll tubes) for the class, plus a wet-weather nature tray of safe leaves, bark and petals. Pre-set Investigation Journal pages and crayons so drawing starts the moment hands are washed.

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**

Stay with the group inside the agreed boundary. No picking or tasting berries or leaves. Gentle hands only with minibeasts; wash hands before drawing.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold the demo find up first so the class looks with bare eyes only. Then place the magnifier over it and invite two or three children to name one new detail. Ask: what can you see now that you could not see before? Keep it short — no tools out yet.
- **Looking Closely:** With the real object in view, model holding the magnifier near the find (not like a monocle) and looking only through a looking window. Say the worked cycle aloud: wonder, look carefully, notice one detail. Then hand out magnifiers and looking windows so tools are already in hands before lining up.
- **Our Nature Walk:** Count the class, set the walking boundary, and point to leaf, bark, petal or safe minibeast so each child knows the one-find choice. At two or three short stops, prompt colour, shape, smooth or bumpy. Protect looking time — budget about 8–9 minutes at stops, not a long march. Wash hands on return.
- **Draw What You Saw:** Send children straight to the Investigation Journal page and crayons. Circulate with: show me the part you saw with the magnifier; what colour; where were the lines or bumps? Celebrate a clear try at the whole object plus one noticeable bit — no scientific labelling expected.
- **What Did Close Looking Help Us Notice?:** Invite three or four children to hold up their drawing and say one concrete detail. Revoice with lesson language: looking closely helps us notice more than a quick glance. Warm, brief, no writing.

What it should show

Most Junior/Senior Infants will draw a recognisable leaf, bark, petal or minibeast and mark at least one detail — veins, spots, bumps, a shell curve or a colour change. Affirm simple describing words (green, round, bumpy). If a drawing shows only a quick outline with no detail, ask them to point to the bit the magnifier showed and add that mark.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **The magnifier makes the leaf grow bigger.** — Hold the leaf beside the magnified view and say gently: it only looks bigger; the leaf stays the same size. Let them check the real leaf again with bare eyes.
- **I need lots of finds — children rush to a new place instead of looking at one thing.** — Point back to the one-find rule and the looking window: stay with this patch; find a second detail on the same object (colour, then bumps).

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Pair with a confident talker and offer starters: I can see... It feels... Teacher sits with them at the first stop to help hold the magnifier steady.	• Prompt a second detail on the same object (colour then shape or bumps) rather than moving to a new find.	• Invite an emergent label (a letter or short word like leaf) and ask them to tell the class which bit the magnifier helped them notice.

Cross-curricular hook

Link to oral language: children rehearse one describing word (colour, shape, texture) when they share their drawing.