



EduTrend Contents

P4C · SCIENCE AND WONDER · PRIMARY

Is It Alive?

Sorting living and non-living things

Ages 8–11

Level: Developing

45 minutes

Whole class circle · up
to 30

Activity 02

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 pupil worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 02 · AT A GLANCE

Is It Alive?

Pupils sort cards: a cat, a tree, a seed, a fire, a robot, a virus, a cloud, a sleeping baby and a fallen leaf. Fire grows and moves; a seed seems to do nothing; a robot moves. Groups compare how they sorted and argue about the hardest cards. They create questions and enquire into what makes something alive.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session pupils can:

- apply criteria for life;
- identify tricky cases;
- reason about definitions;
- build on others' ideas.

KEY WORDS

alive · grow · breathe · move · seed · robot

CURRICULUM LINKS

Science: living things and their habitats. Computing: robots. English: definitions.

1**STIMULUS**

Share something to think about

2**THINK**

Quiet thinking time

3**QUESTION**

Create and choose a question

4**ENQUIRE**

Reason together

5**BUILD**

Agree, disagree, add

6**REFLECT**

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Alive and not alive cards
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Everyone may pass. Discuss ideas, not people, and use the story or invented examples rather than personal situations.

ACTIVITY 02 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–8 min Stimulus	Sort the living and non-living cards.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
8–18 min Questions	Pupils create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
18–40 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"What makes something alive?"</i>
40–45 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Explain your hardest card and your decision.

ACTIVITY 02 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Biologists use characteristics such as growth, reproduction, response and needing energy to describe living things.

Borderline cases such as viruses show that the definition of life is still discussed.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Moving means alive.” Fire and robots move.
- “A seed is not alive because it does nothing.” It is alive but dormant.
- “Science has one simple definition of life.” It is debated at the edges.

Adapting the activity

Support

Sort six cards.

Stretch

Ask: what would alien life need to count as alive?

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Is it alive?

Sort and reason.

Is it alive?

Thing	Alive?	Why

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Could a robot ever be alive? Before the enquiry I thought... Now I think... because...

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight pupils; copy as needed.

Pupil	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Is It Alive? is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Science and Wonder programme (primary, level: developing). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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