

Preparation

- Print/ copy the task sheet OR
- Create a copy on A4 paper or in a scrapbook

Purpose

- To identify living and non-living specimens and make claims about the groups that specimens belong in, for example plants or animals

Description

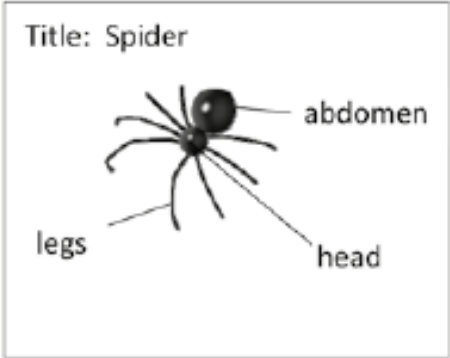
1. Students examine living and non-living specimens in their home environments.
2. They describe the features of these specimens.
3. They make claims about whether the specimens are living or non-living and support these claims with observations and past experiences.

Name: Veronica Date: 9 June

Location: On the tree in my backyard

Specimen 1

Title: Spider



I think this specimen is living because:

it can run and it can eat.

EXAMPLE:

A 'Home explorers journal' task sheet completed at home.

Before the task

- Locate samples or photographs of living and non-living things.
- Explain that students will be looking at specimens of living and non-living things in their backyard or around the home.
- Discuss safety considerations when looking at living things.
- Discuss the importance of disturbing specimens as little as possible, and returning them to where they were found. Develop a 'code for caring' for looking at specimens.
- For each specimen claim that 'It is living'. Ask students to 'Agree', 'Disagree' or whether they are 'Not sure'. Discuss the reasons for their choices.
- Present the claim for each specimen that 'It is a plant'. Ask students to 'Agree', 'Disagree' or whether they are 'Not sure'. Discuss the reasons for their choices.
- Ask the following questions before completing the 'Home explorer's journal':
 - How can we find out if it is living? How can we tell?
 - When we want to find something living, what should we look for?
 - When we want to find something non-living, what should we look for?

OPTIONAL: Take photographs of the specimens and return them to their places immediately.

After the task

- Ask the following questions again, telling students they may like to change their answers.
 - How can we find out if it is living? How can we tell?
 - When we want to find something living, what should we look for?
 - When we want to find something non-living, what should we look for?
- Discuss students' reasons for designating specimens as living or non-living.
- You may wish to share your drawings or photos of the specimens you examined with others (classmates, teacher, family members).

Explore some more

- Explore the collections of the [Australian Museum](https://australianmuseum.net.au). (<https://australianmuseum.net.au>. Find the 'Museum Collections' in drop down menu of the Discover and Learn tab).
- Discuss specimens which were once living and which were not. Look into the different classifications for living and non-living things in the 'Natural sciences collection areas'.



EXAMPLE:

A 'sample 'Code for caring'.



Encourage students to wear gloves to protect their hands when picking up rocks and moving leaves and logs so they can observe the small animals underneath. Remind them not to touch animals, as they may bite or sting them. Be aware of allergies that students might have, for example, plant allergies. Students might also suffer from allergies to different substances and detergents as well as the latex used in disposable gloves.

Information note for families

Name:

Date:

This activity enables students to begin to explore how living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things. Students will explore their home, garden and/or surrounds and choose:

- At least one thing that is non-living (such as a stone, a plastic bag, a toy car)
- At least one thing that is living (such as a goldfish, a dog, a caterpillar).

Students write a journal entry for each one on the provided 'Home explorer's journal' sheet.

Each entry should include:

- their name
- the date
- where they found it (location)
- a labelled diagram of the specimen
- whether it is living or non-living and why they think that.

Students are also invited to take a photo of the specimen to share with others.

Code for caring

It is important to establish a 'Code for caring' to help students search carefully without disturbing the search area. Students should:

- Replace stones and logs after searching under them.
- Leave all plants and gardens undisturbed.
- Leave all dangerous animals alone.
- Wear gloves to avoid bites and stings.
- Use spoons and damp brushes when picking up small animals to avoid crushing them.
- When observing animals, keep them in a labelled container that has air holes, and after a short time return the animal to where it was found.

If students find something that they are unsure of, whether it is living or non-living, they are encouraged to complete a journal entry about it discussion.

PrimaryConnections® Linking science with literacy Feathers, fur or leaves?

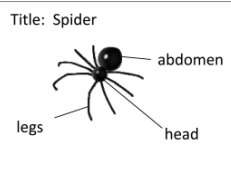
Home explorer's journal

Name: Veronica Date: 9 June

Location: On the tree in my backyard

Specimen 1

Title: Spider



I think this specimen is living because:

it can run and it can eat.

Work sample of 'Home explorer's journal'
© Australian Academy of Science

Home explorer's journal

Name:		Date:
Location:		
Specimen 1	I think this specimen is <u>living</u> because:	

Name:		Date:
Location:		
Specimen 2	I think this specimen is <u>non-living</u> because:	