Unit 1 Lesson 3: Leaves, Legs, or Neither

Focus Areas: Classifying Living Things; Science, Language Arts, Math
Focus Skills: observing, describing, classifying, and recording data

Objectives

• To determine what living things need to survive

• To recognize patterns of classification

• To distinguish between plants and animals while recognizing the shared characteristics of both

Essential Questions

• How are plants and animals similar?

• How are plants and animals different?

Essential Understandings

• Although widely different in appearance, both plants and animals need food, water, air, and the ability to adapt to their environment.

• Both plants and animals grow and produce others like themselves.

• Green plants are capable of producing their own food.

Background

Plants and animals exhibit a variety of sizes, colors, and adaptations to their environment. Furthermore, they satisfy their basic needs in different ways. However, all living things share certain characteristics that distinguish them from non-living things. These include: the need for food, water, air, and protection from the elements. In addition, all living things grow and produce more like themselves. Only green plants are capable of producing their own food! Therefore, all other living things depend on green plants to survive. Even meat-eating creatures depend upon other creatures that eat plants.
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Vocabulary

characteristic something that a person or thing has which makes them part of a group
classify to put things that are alike in a group
observe to examine something very carefully
similar having some things the same

Logistics

Time: 30 minutes
Group Size: 2 to 30
Space: an area for seating and placing of hula hoops

Materials

live plants and seeds
table cards of plants and animals *
photographs of participants’ pets (optional)
8 index cards 3” x 5”
markers
2 hula hoops of different colors
2 signs, one for ANIMAL and one for PLANT

* single copy provided

Preparation

Gather the materials and prepare the space.
Create a Venn diagram using the hula hoops.

Activity

Introduction

1. Review Unit 1 Lesson 2 by singing the song, We Are Alive!
2. Distribute the cards and samples of living and non-living things to the participants.
Activity

Introduction (continued)

3. Call attention to the hula hoops and tell the participants that they are going to place their picture or sample in one of the two circles (living/color 1 or non-living/color 2).

4. As the individuals place their card or sample, ask why they chose the category they did. Point out that they are CLASSIFYING objects based on the living/non-living CHARACTERISTICS. If an individual needs help, ask a leading question: Does it grow? Can it make more like itself? Does it need food?, etc.

5. Discuss and evaluate their choices.

6. Collect all the cards and samples from the “living” hula hoop for redistribution and put the non-living specimens aside.

Involvement

1. Pose the question, “What do all living things need to live?” Write the responses on the board under the category “NEED.” Repeat the procedure using the question, “What can all living things do?” List the responses under the category “CAN DO.”

2. Create a mutually agreed upon list and write these on 3” x 5” cards.

3. Place these cards in the intersecting portion of the two hula hoops. Place “ANIMAL” and “PLANT” signs in the portions of the hoops that do not intersect.

4. Distribute the samples and pictures of living things and explain that although all of these have some things that make them alike (calling attention to the 3” x 5” cards in the intersection), they are classified or named as either a PLANT or an ANIMAL.

5. Put the words “PLANT” and “ANIMAL” on the board and ask the participants to identify the differences between the two groups. List the responses on the board.
Activity

Involvement (continued)

6. Allow time for individuals to compare their sample/picture to the list in order to determine in which group their sample/picture should be included.

7. In small groups or as individuals, have the participants place their sample/picture in the correct area.

8. Discuss their choices, allowing individuals whose placement is in question to justify their choice, and reposition their card or sample if necessary.

Follow Up

1. Have the participants create a graph to illustrate the number of plants and animals represented.

2. As a group, list new characteristics to regroup the animals (for example; two legs, four legs, more legs, and no legs). Regroup the animals according to the established criteria.

Note: This may expand to a small group activity for free time when children set their own criteria and sort the samples/pictures based on their choices. They may want to cut out pictures from magazines to add to the card file.