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Living and Non Living Things

A guided, inquiry-based workbook for exploring living and non-living things.

Chapter-1

Do you ever get hungry?

Starting with yourself

Before we look at anything else, let's start with someone we already know very well "you".

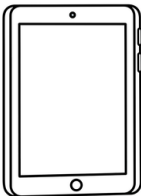
Can you feel hungry?

- What does it feel like, exactly? Where in your body?
- What happens if you don't eat for a long time?

But what about your toy?

- Does he ever ask for food?
- If you left him alone for a week, would he be okay? Would you?
- How could we find out if he gets hungry... without just asking him?

Reasoning: Read each objects name and ask, Do you think it ever gets hungry?

Puppy 	Caterpillar 	Crayons 
Potted flower 	Teddy 	Rock 
Tablet 	Bird 	Baby 

ACTIVITY 1

Hungry?

Never-Hungry?

Parent note: Ask the child to cut, sort and paste the sorting* sheet in above boxes.

Tip: Help with reading or read to the child.

WATCH TOGETHER

- ☐ Put a toy and a houseplant side by side. Go away for two days. Don't water the plant. Don't feed the toy.
- ☐ Come back. What changed? What stayed the same?

FOR THE PARENT

All living things need food, water, or sunlight to survive and grow. But a toy doesn't need these, which is why the wilting plant helps show a child how living things rely on energy to stay alive.

Different types of foods?

We have explored that some of us feel hungry and some of us don't. But do we all eat the same food?

Do a butterfly eat the same food as a lion?

- Rabbit → Carrots, lettuce, and leafy greens
- Panda → Bamboo
- Elephant → Grass, leaves, and fruits
- Monkey → Bananas and other fruits
- Lion → Meat
- Cow → Grass
- Horse → Hay, grass, and apples
- Squirrel → Nuts and seeds
- Penguin → Fish
- Frog → Insects
- Duck → Plants, seeds, and small insects
- Bee → Nectar from flowers
- Bear → Fish, berries, and honey

Does all of them eat same foods? or They eat different ones?

Chapter-2

Can you move freely?

Free will, rocks, and candle flames

You already noticed that you can feel hungry. Now let's look at something else you can do.

Can you move your hand right now, just because you decided to?

☐ Did anything make you do it, or was it just... you?

Parent note: Record what he thinks and reasons in short. [Example: Yes, because our puppy can move, run, and jump.]

Puppy	
Caterpillares	
Crayons	
Potted flowers	
Teddy	
Bear	
Baby	
Rock	
Tablet	
Bird	

ACTIVITY 2

NINE IN NINE

9 Objects to find in 9 minutes, that move with “will” and you have never noticed them.

9 Objects to find in 9 minutes, that moves but without “will” and you thought the otherwise.

Chapter-3

Did you use to be smaller?

Growth, seeds, and the mystery of time

Show your child a baby photo of themselves. Ask: Is this you?

- ☐ You are bigger now. You look different. Are you the same person?
- ☐ Who made the decision to grow?
- ☐ Did you have to do anything... or did it just happen?

Now look at a seed. It is tiny and hard. It looks like a small stone.

- ☐ Is it alive right now? How could you find out?
- ☐ What would it need to start growing?
- ☐ Has it already decided what it will become?

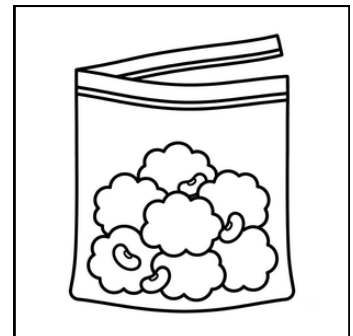
Activity 3:

Bean in the Bag!

Materials: Zip-lock bag | 6-7 Cotton balls or tissue | 5-6 Beans (any) | water | tape

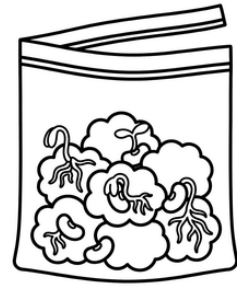
Instructions:

1. **Get the Bed Ready:** Take your cotton balls or paper towel and get them wet, but not dripping! They should feel like a damp sponge. Place them inside your zip-lock bag.
2. **Add the Beans:** Gently place your beans into the bag, right on top of the damp cotton balls. Make sure they are spread out so they have room to stretch.
3. **Zip it Shut:** Carefully seal the top of the bag so the water stays inside.
4. **Hang it Up:** Use tape to hang your bag on a sunny window.
5. **Watch and Wait:** Check your beans every day! Soon, you will see a little tail (the root) start to grow.



DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- What is the story of this bean?
- If we could talk to the bean, what do you think it would say it needs to grow up?
- Does the bean have a plan, or is it just following a secret set of instructions?
- How can something so small and quiet change so much over time?
- If you were a seed, what kind of plant would you choose to become and why?
- The bean is using all its energy to turn into a plant. What do you think you are using your energy for right now?

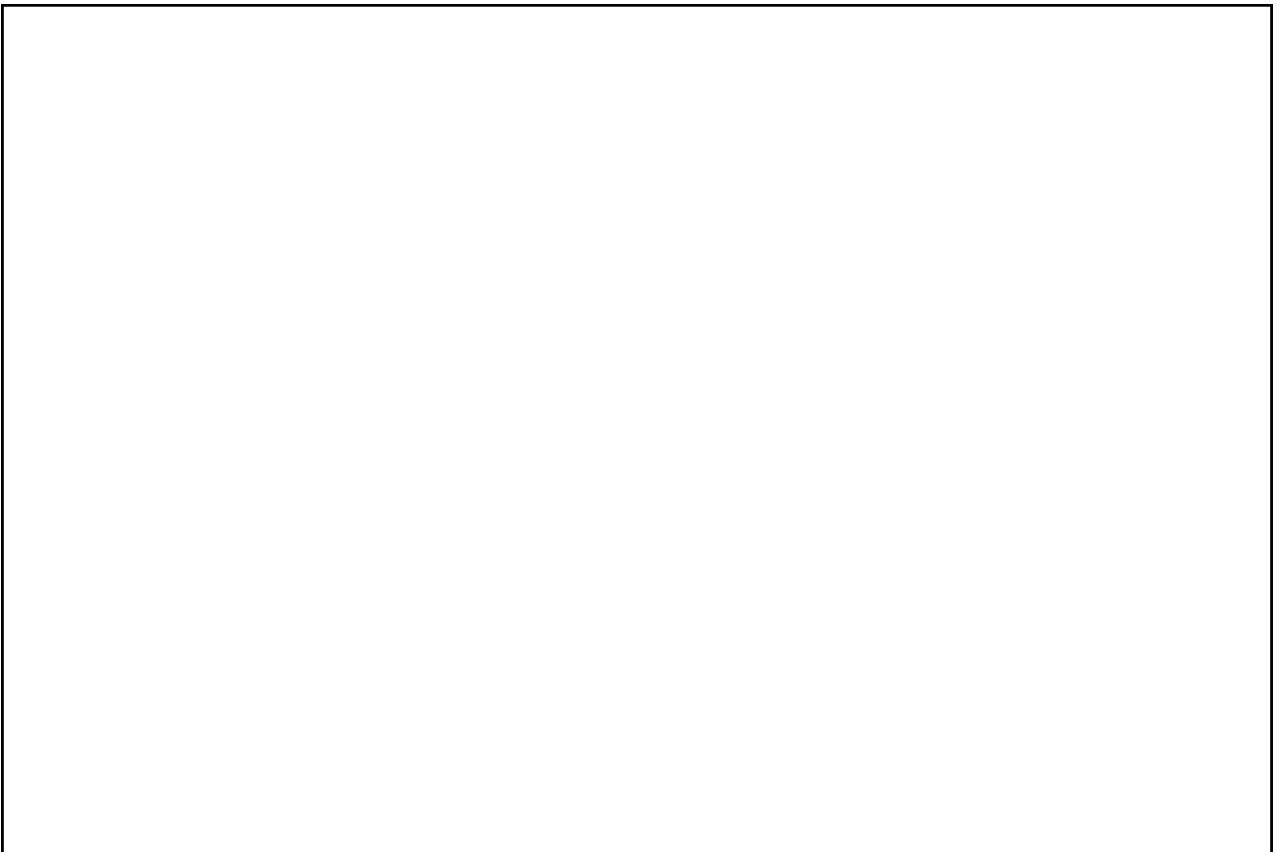
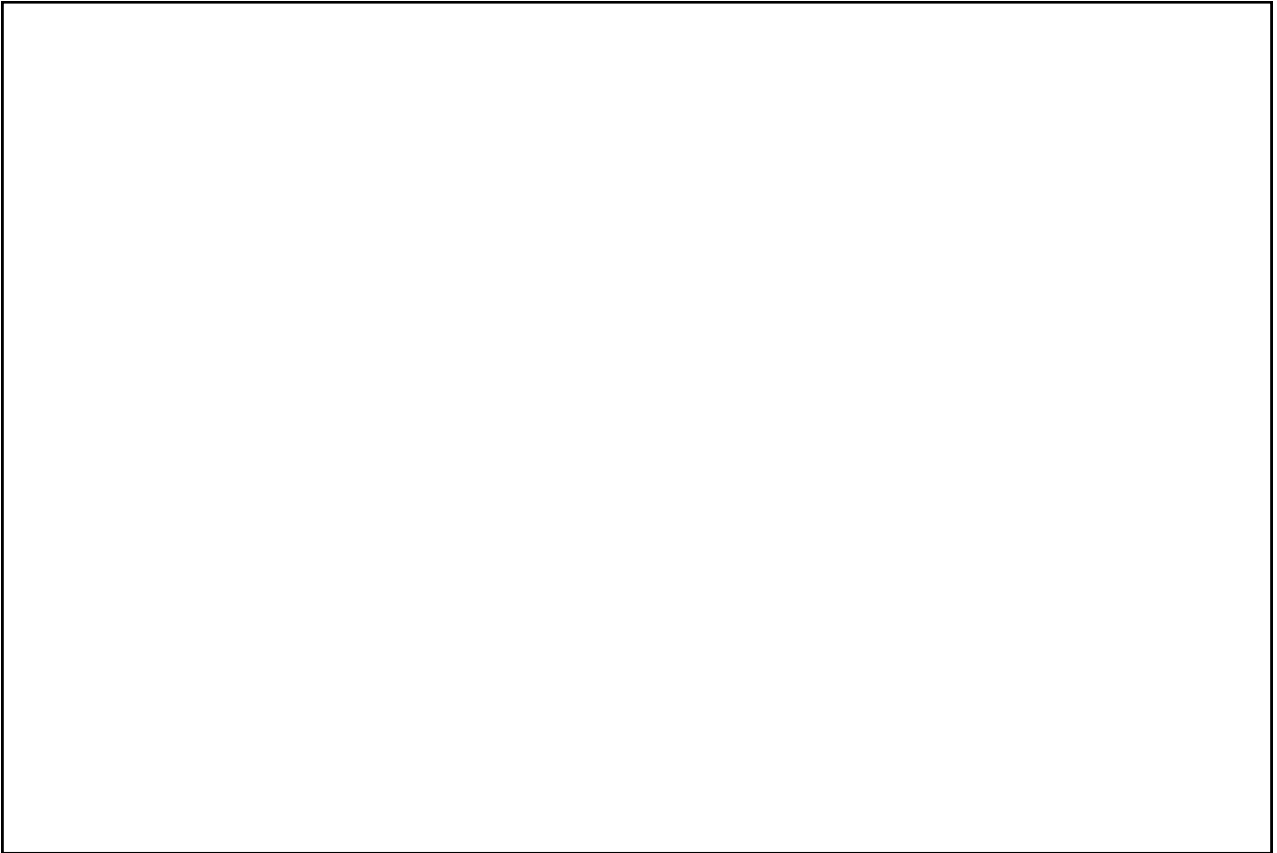


FOR THE PARENT

Growth in living things is directed by genetic information inside every cell. The seed 'knows' what to become (encoded in DNA). This is fundamentally different from a crystal growing (adding molecules from outside) or a fire spreading (consuming fuel). The child doesn't need to know DNA yet, but the idea that 'the instructions are inside' is a beautiful early intuition to plant.

Draw and Imagine -1

Can you draw one thing that grows bigger over time and one thing that stays the exact same size?



Chapter-4

What happens when you touch something hot?

Responding, reacting, and feeling

Touch something cold. What did your hand do? Did you decide to react or did it just happen?

- ☐ Who was in charge (you, or your hand)?
- ☐ What about a sneeze? Did you choose that?

Look at your houseplant. Turn it so its back faces the window.

- ☐ Come back in two days. Where are the leaves facing now?
- ☐ Did the plant think about this? Did it decide?
- ☐ Is reacting the same as thinking?

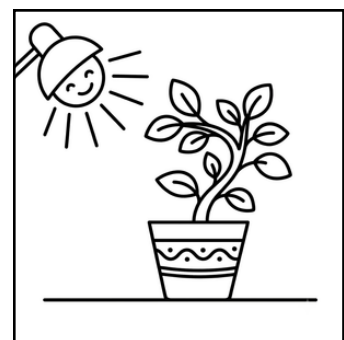
Tap a Toy. Does it reacts?

- ☐ Tap your pet (gently). Does it react?
- ☐ Tap the rock. Anything?
- ☐ What is the difference between them?

Activity 4:

WATCH TOGETHER

- Place your houseplant near a window for three days.
- Rotate it 180 degrees. Watch over the next three days.
- Sketch the plant's lean direction each day.
- This is called phototropism, but don't say the word yet.
- Just watch.



FOR THE PARENT

Response to stimuli is a core property of living things. Plants don't 'feel' in the way we do, but they have chemical signaling systems (auxins) that cause cells on the shaded side to elongate, bending the plant toward light. The child's question, 'Did it decide?' is actually one of the deepest in biology. At what level of complexity does 'responding' become 'experiencing'? Nobody fully knows.

Play and Learn:

The 'Freeze' Challenge

How to do it:

- Tell the child to stand perfectly still and try not to blink.
- Ask them to hold it as long as they can.
- The Lesson: Eventually, they must blink.

Discussion Prompt:

- You wanted to keep your eyes open, but your body decided to blink anyway. Why? Is there a difference between what you want and what your body wants?

Observe:

Watch an animal (like a pet, a bird in the garden, or an insect). When something changes in its world, like a sudden sound or a new object, how does it react? Use the list below to compare yourself!

- The Signal: What happened to make it react? (A sound? A touch? A movement?)
- The Action: Did it freeze? Did it run? Did it explore?
- The Similarity: How is its reaction like yours when you are surprised?
- The Uniqueness: What did it do that you would never do?

Chapter-5

What does it mean for something to stop?

Endings, and what they tell us

If a clock stops, is it broken? If an animal stops moving, is it the same thing?

- ☐ Can you fix a broken clock? Can you fix a flower that has dried up?
- ☐ What is the difference?

Pick up a dry, fallen leaf from outside. Hold it

- ☐ Was this leaf alive once? How do you know?
- ☐ When did it stop being alive, when it fell, or before?
- ☐ Is it still part of something living?

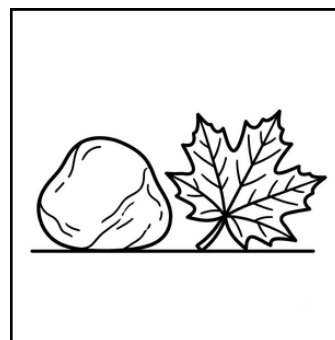
A broken toy doesn't know it is broken. Does a plant know it is dying?

- ☐ How would we ever find out?
- ☐ Is 'knowing' something that only living things can do?

Activity 5:

A VERY SLOW WATCH

- Collect one fallen leaf and one small stone.
- Put them in a corner of the garden (or a pot of soil).
- Check them once a week for a month.
- What happens to the leaf? What happens to the stone?



FOR THE PARENT

Decomposition is one of the most profound signs of life. Only things that were once alive decompose (broken down by other living things: fungi, bacteria). The stone will not change meaningfully. The leaf will slowly disappear, returning to the soil. This is the carbon cycle, nutrient cycling, and the interconnectedness of life, all visible in a corner of your garden. If the child asks about death directly, this is a natural place to go gently deeper: *living things end; that ending is also a beginning for others.*

THE PAUSE VS. THE END

If you fall asleep, you stop moving. If a puppy sleeps, it stops moving. What is the difference between them and a dry leaf?

Item	What is it doing?	Is it a "Pause" or "End"?	Can it restart?
A sleeping pet	Resting	Pause	Yes
A hibernating bear			
A seed in a jar			
A broken toy			
A dry, fallen leaf			
A puddle evaporating			

If you add water to a dried-up toy, does it come back to life? What about a seed? What is the special ingredient that only living things have?

THIS IS NOT THE END.

No page in this book says: 'A living thing grows, moves, eats, and reproduces.' Your child already knows that; he had figured most of it out himself, by looking, by testing, by wondering.

The questions asked here are the same questions biologists ask. Not the same words, but the same wondering.

Some things left to wonder about:

- Is a virus alive?
- Is fire alive?
- Could something be alive on another planet, in a way we don't recognize?
- Are you the same person you were when you were a baby?

Some recommended topics to explore.

Topics for Visuals:

1. Ant colony time-lapse
2. Mushroom growing time-lapse
3. Butterfly emerging from a chrysalis
4. Tadpole growing legs
5. A baby animal with its mother.
6. Seed germination underground, slow motion
7. Firefly bioluminescence at night
8. Venus flytrap feeding and digesting
9. Frog Life Cycle (Tadpoles to Frogs)
10. Pea Plant Growing
11. Sea Animals
12. Earthworms
13. Birds, reptiles, and amphibians
14. Volcano eruptions

Topics for Observation:

1. Bird watching
2. Garden soil
3. Pond ripples
4. Pet behavior
5. Leaf growth
6. Ant trails
7. Cloud shapes
8. Bug tracking
9. Flower light-chasing
10. Shadow shifting
11. Seed sprouting
12. Rain patterns
13. Spider spinning
14. Tree breathing
15. Tree bark textures