

# Living and Non-Living Things

A Science A-Z Life Series

Word Count: 472



  
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Written by Alyse Sweeney

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## KEY ELEMENTS USED IN THIS BOOK

**The Big Idea:** Humans rely on a wide variety of living and non-living things. But we have to take care of living things differently than non-living things. Plants need water, light, and air to grow. We need plants to use for food, clothing, and much more. Animals require food, water, air, and shelter. We use animals for food, clothing, labor, companionship, and much more. As humans, we have the ability and responsibility to care for ourselves and other living things so that our own needs are met and to ensure that the world will always be full of diverse living things.

**Key words:** adapt, alive, cells, change, characteristics, dead, develop, energy, environment, grow, living, non-living, reproduce, reproduction, respond, Sun, thing

**Key comprehension skill:** Compare and contrast

*Other suitable comprehension skills:* Classify information; main idea and details; identify facts; elements of a genre

**Key reading strategy:** Ask and answer questions

*Other suitable reading strategies:* Connect to prior knowledge; summarize; visualize; using a table of contents and headings; using a glossary and bold terms

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### Reading Levels

Learning A-Z	K
Lexile	480L

### Correlations

Fountas and Pinnell*	J
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\*Correlated independent reading level



## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
All Living Things Have Six Rules in Common.....	5
Do Living Things Follow All Six Rules? .....	10
Living Things .....	11
Non-Living Things .....	12
Is It Living or Non-Living? .....	13
Conclusion .....	15
Glossary .....	16



## Introduction

This clock moves and makes noise.  
But is it alive? Was it ever alive?  
What about this log? How do you  
know if something is **living** or not?

## All living things have six rules in common.



### 1. Living things grow and **develop**.

Seeds grow into plants. Puppies grow into dogs. Babies grow into children, and children grow into adults. Living things change as they grow.



A dog is fully developed at the age of two. Are people?



### 2. Living things get and use **energy**.

Energy comes from the Sun. Plants use the Sun's energy to make food. People get energy by eating plants or by eating animals that eat plants.



### 3. Living things **reproduce**.

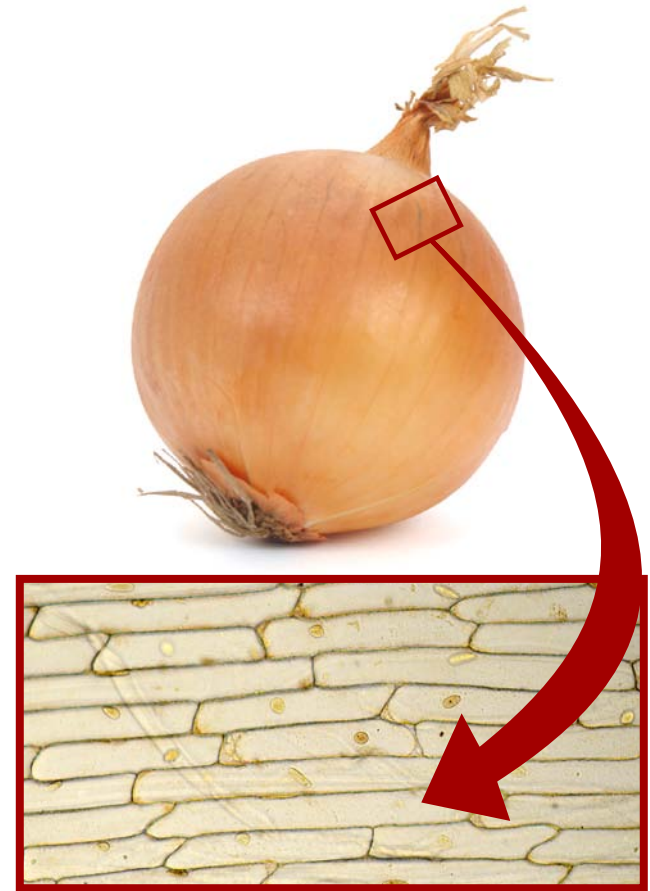
This means that living things make more of their own kind. Tigers make more tigers. Roses make more roses. People make more people. But can pens make more pens?

Of course not!



**WOWSER!**

Without reproduction, living things would disappear!



Onion cells are boxy.

### 4. Living things are made of **cells**.

Most cells are too small to see without a microscope. But cells have all the material needed for life. Some living things are made of just one cell.

People are made of trillions of cells.

**5.** Living things **respond** to their environment.



For example, a bear responds to cold winters by sleeping in a cave. A plant will die without enough water or sunlight. But a pen will stay a pen no matter how cold or hot it is.

**6.** Living things **adapt** to their environment.



Some rabbits' fur turns white in the winter. With white fur, it can hide in the snow

from enemies. In summer it turns brown to blend with the ground.

## Do Living Things Follow All Six Rules?

Yes! A thing is not living if it has only some of the characteristics. Think about a toy car. It gets and uses energy. It responds when you push its buttons. But it doesn't grow and develop. It doesn't reproduce, and it isn't made of cells. So a toy car is not a living thing.





## Living Things

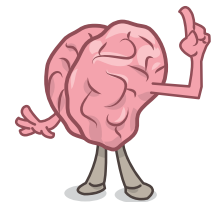
A living thing is anything that is now alive, or was once alive. A log is not alive now, but it was once a tree.



## Non-Living Things

A **non-living** thing is anything that was never alive. Metal, water, plastic, and rocks are all things that were never alive.

Now turn the page for a living/non-living quiz!



## Is It Living or Non-Living?

Which pictures show a living thing?



If you answered all four, you're right! Sure, a cat is a living thing. But do all living things move? No! A tree doesn't move, but it is alive. The log and the apple were both once alive. So they are both still thought of as living things.



Which pictures above show a non-living thing?

The clock moves and makes noise. But it is not a living thing. The car and pen are not alive and were never alive. They are made of metal and plastic. Is a dead flower non-living? No! It was once alive, so it is a living thing.







## Conclusion

Now you know what makes something living or non-living! Take a walk outside. Find five living things and five non-living things. For fun, teach a friend or family member what you learned in this book!

## Glossary

<b>adapt</b>	to change because of new conditions (p. 9)
<b>cells</b>	tiny parts of living things that carry everything needed for life (p. 8)
<b>develop</b>	to grow or expand (p. 5)
<b>energy</b>	the ability to do work or to make a change (p. 6)
<b>living</b>	now alive or once was alive (p. 4)
<b>non-living</b>	not alive now and never was alive (p. 12)
<b>reproduce</b>	to make another living thing of the same kind (p. 7)
<b>respond</b>	to react to something that happens (p. 9)