

Resource — Living or Non-Living? Sorting Cards

Printable sorting-card resource for Lesson 1. A set of picture-and-word cards showing living, non-living and once-living things from Australian environments for students to cut out and sort. Includes a teacher answer key and sorting-mat headings. Supports the Ecosystem Explorer worksheet.

Print one set per group on card and cut along the lines. Students sort the cards onto the three sorting mats. Use the answer key to check and to address misconceptions (a common one is thinking that moving things, such as water or a car, are alive).

Sorting-mat headings

Print these large, one per sheet, as the headings students sort under:

LIVING (grows, needs food/water, makes more of itself)	NON-LIVING (never was alive)	ONCE-LIVING (was alive, now is not)
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Cards to print and cut

Each cell is one card. Students may write the word on the back if you want a memory-style game as well.

Card	Card	Card	Card
Numbat	Gum tree	Granite rock	Bobtail lizard
Kangaroo grass	Rain puddle	Wedge-tailed eagle	Fallen gum leaf
Honey bee	Plastic bottle	Banksia flower	Sand
Rock wallaby	Wooden fence post	Earthworm	Seashell
Quenda (bandicoot)	Tap water	Mushroom / fungus	Dry leaf litter

Teacher answer key

Category	Cards
Living	Numbat, gum tree, kangaroo grass, honey bee, banksia flower, rock wallaby, earthworm, quenda, bobtail lizard, mushroom/fungus, wedge-tailed eagle
Non-living	Granite rock, rain puddle, plastic bottle, sand, tap water, seashell*
Once-living	Fallen gum leaf, wooden fence post, dry leaf litter, seashell*

*A **seashell** is a great discussion card: the shell material was made by a living animal, so many teachers accept it as "once-living". A **wooden fence post** and a **gum leaf** are also "once-living" — good prompts for the idea that some non-living parts of an ecosystem were once alive and will be broken down by decomposers (a link forward to Lesson 3).

If a group finishes early, ask them to add two cards of their own from the schoolground walk and place them on the correct mat.