



Explorers Sample Theme Plan: Junior Infants

07. Plants

Use the story of *The Enormous Turnip* to introduce the concept of plants and growing. Study plants in the local natural environment. Then take a closer look at plants, focusing on their parts.

Notes

If possible, pick a local grass environment (or similar) to study, e.g. a school garden or field. Aim for somewhere with a variety of plant life.

Watch out for the misconception that flowers and plants are the same thing.

Explain that flowers are part of a plant. Highlight that trees and vegetables are plants too.

Materials	Books	Useful Links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of common plants, e.g. buttercup, daisy, turnip, carrot, lettuce, cucumber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Something</i> by Rebecca Cobb <i>Jack's Garden</i> by Henry Cole <i>The Curious Garden</i> by Peter Brown 	www.irishwildflowers.ie www.wildflowersofireland.net www.botanicgardens.ie/glasnevin/schools www.biodiversityireland.ie www.bsbi.org/ireland www.noticenature.ie www.leavenotraceireland.org

Key Vocabulary

History		Geography		Science	
first	farmer	grass	soil	plant	leaves
next	wife	tree	buttercup	roots	flower
last	children	leaf	daisy	stem	
enormous	pets	twig	turnip		
turnip	mouse	stone	carrot		

Integration

Language: Use *The Enormous Turnip/An Tornpa Mór* as a text for oral language and reading. The text is also used as part of Folens *Starlight Pre-Reading Skills Book* and Folens *Abair Liam A*.

Maths: Practise counting, sorting and measuring in the context of plants and things that are found in the local natural environment.

Visual Arts: Create drawings and paintings of plants, construct plants and/or use parts of plants for printing.

Physical Education: Use the local grass environment (if appropriate) for outdoor and adventure activities, e.g. walking, plant-based treasure hunts, simple orienteering and other outdoor challenges.

Drama: Use *The Enormous Turnip* as a stimulus in drama development.

SPHE: Appreciate and take responsibility for taking care of the local environment.

Home/Parental Involvement

Use the language of 'first', 'next' and 'last' when reading stories at home.

Spend time in the garden, park or fields; observe the plants and other natural materials there and help children to name the parts of plants.

Cook with children – draw their attention to foods that come from plants.

Theme Overview

D indicates an *Explorers* Digital Resource on FolensOnline.

P indicates an *Explorers* Print Resource in the *Explorers* Student Book/printable on FolensOnline.

	LESSON 1	LESSON 2	LESSON 3
HISTORY	<p>Focus: Listen and respond to the story</p> <p>D The Enormous Turnip: Story Listen to the story. Make a connection with vegetables and growing. Ask children about their own experiences. What is your favourite vegetable? Where do you get it? Have you ever grown anything?</p>	<p>Focus: Sequence the story</p> <p>D The Enormous Turnip: Story Recap the story. Focus on sequencing the events. Who helped first, next, after that? D The Enormous Turnip: Activity Complete the sequencing activity. P The Enormous Turnip p. 32 + The Enormous Turnip Printable Cut and stick the pictures from the story in the correct order.</p>	<p>Focus: Retell the story</p> <p>D The Enormous Turnip: Story Recap the story. Retell the story through drama. Children could wear masks to take on the roles of the characters.</p>
	<p>Focus: Introduce a grass environment</p> <p>D The Garden: Story Listen to the story. D The Garden: Explore Explore the garden. Focus on the plants and natural materials. Discuss children's own gardens, parks or fields in their local area. D The Garden: Label Label the natural materials.</p>	<p>Focus: Explore a grass environment</p> <p>P Explore: A Grass Environment p. 33 Make predictions. What do you think you will see in the garden? Field Study Explore a local grass environment.* Focus on the plants and natural materials. Sort them by different criteria, e.g. colour and size. Count the number of each plant found. Take/draw pictures. P Explore: A Grass Environment p. 33 Record findings. D Natural Materials: Sort Sort the natural materials.</p>	<p>Focus: Taking care of the environment</p> <p>P Taking Care of Our Environment p. 34 Discuss each picture and decide if each person is taking care of their environment or not. Discuss ways in which children can take care of their environment. Make a sign to share one of these.</p>
SCIENCE	<p>Focus: Introduce the parts of a plant</p> <p>Invite children to freely explore a selection of plants. Establish what they already know. D The Parts of a Plant: Story Listen to the story. Discuss the parts of the plant.</p>	<p>Focus: Study the parts of a plant</p> <p>Investigate Study a selection of plants. Focus on identifying their parts. Use the senses to describe their colour, shape, texture and smell. Create drawings, rubbings and/or prints with the parts. Taste plants that can be eaten, e.g. carrot, lettuce and cucumber.</p>	<p>Focus: Label the parts of a plant</p> <p>D Parts of a Plant: Label Label the parts of a plant. P Parts of a Plant p. 35 + Parts of a Plant Printable Cut and stick the parts of a plant in the correct place. Challenge: Write labels for each part.</p>

*Grass environments can be substituted for a different local environment. Where it is not possible to do a field study, photographs could be used and a selection of plants and natural materials could be brought into the classroom.

Curriculum Information	
History	
Stand and Strand Unit	Skills
<p>Story: Stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the chronology of events (beginning, middle, end) in a story • Express or record stories through art work, drama, music, mime and movement and using information and communication technologies • Display storyline pictures showing episodes in sequence 	<p>Working as a historian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time and chronology <input type="checkbox"/> Using evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication
Geography	
Stand and Strand Unit	Skills
<p>Natural environments: The local natural environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of, explore and discuss some aspects of natural environments in the immediate locality of the school • Observe, collect and investigate a variety of natural materials in the local environment • Record and communicate experiences and observations using oral language and pictures <p>Environmental awareness and care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe, discuss and appreciate the attributes of the local environment beauty and diversity of plants and animals in a variety of habitats attractive elements of natural and human environments • Appreciate that people share the environment with plant and animal life • Develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of and enhancing the environment • Identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment 	<p>A sense of place and space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A sense of place <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A sense of space <p>Maps, globes and graphical skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Picturing places <p>Geographical investigation skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questioning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Observing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Predicting <input type="checkbox"/> Investigating and experimenting <input type="checkbox"/> Estimating and measuring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analysing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recording and communicating
Science	
Stand and Strand Unit	Skills
<p>Living things: Plants and animals</p> <p>Variety and characteristics of living things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe, discuss and identify a variety of plants and animals in different habitats in the immediate environment • Recognise and identify the external parts of living things 	<p>Working scientifically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questioning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Observing <input type="checkbox"/> Predicting <input type="checkbox"/> Investigating and experimenting <input type="checkbox"/> Estimating and measuring <input type="checkbox"/> Analysing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recording and communicating <p>Designing and making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring <input type="checkbox"/> Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Making <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating