

Plants and Animals VELS Guide Levels 2-4

Strand: Physical and Social Learning

The Plants and Animals Program is designed primarily for Early Years levels 2 – 4, but it can be adapted to suit different age groups. Within the strand Physical and Social Learning the Plants and Animals program is able to include criteria in each of the domains however they are not overly emphasised within the program.

Domain: **Health and Physical Education**

Within the program the children identify signs that are used in the Herb Garden to identify plants that are used for cooking, pest repellents, medicine and for their scent. Students are also made aware of safe ways of observing animals and returning them to their habitat.

Learning Focus: Level 1

They learn about local signs and symbols related to safety (for example, traffic signs or symbols on medicines)

Standards: Level 3

Dimension: Health Knowledge and Promotion

At Level 3, They identify basic safety skills and strategies at home, school and in the community, and describe methods for recognising and avoiding harmful situations.

Domain: **Interpersonal Development**

Interpersonal Development is not a major domain emphasized within this program however the Plants and Animals Program allows students to interact with their peers, teachers, adult helpers and presenter whilst completing tasks such as creating insect repellent bags and locating animals within their natural habitats.

Standards: Level 2

Dimension: Building social relationships

At Level 2, students behave appropriately in a range of social situations. They identify the feelings and needs of other people. Students identify and accept that there are consequences for their actions.

Standards: Level 3

Dimension: Building social relationships

At Level 3, students demonstrate respect for others and exhibit appropriate behaviour for maintaining friendships with other people. They support each other by sharing ideas and materials, offering assistance, giving appropriate feedback and acknowledging individual differences. They work with others to reduce, avoid and resolve conflict.

Standards: Level 4

Dimension: Building social relationships

At Level 4, students demonstrate, through their interactions in social situations, respect for a diverse range of people and groups.

Domain: **Personal Learning**

In this program students are encouraged to listen, ask questions and clarify understandings. Students are encouraged to take risks with locating and touching animals within a safe environment.

Learning Focus: Levels 1 & 2

Students reflect on their own learning by responding to prompts such as, 'What do you know now that you didn't know before?'

Students are provided with opportunities to learn with peers and to share their feelings and thoughts about learning with others. They begin to understand that listening to the responses of others can assist them to make sense of new experiences and provide useful cues for their own learning. Students are encouraged to take risks with their learning and begin to understand that mistakes can be a vehicle for further learning.

Standards: Level 3

Dimension: The Individual Learner

They seek teacher feedback to develop their content knowledge and understanding

Domain: **Civics and Citizenship**

Throughout the program the students are immersed in the Gardens using a sensory approach that promotes a sense of awe and wonder and respect for all forms of life. The importance of plants and animals in our world and some aspects of sustainable gardening are explored using hands on activities.

Standards: Level 3

Dimension: Civic knowledge and understanding

They explain why protection and care for the natural and built environment is important.

Strand: Discipline based Learning

The Plants and Animals program is designed for students from Early Years (levels 2 – 4) but it can be adapted to suit other age groups. Within the strand, **Discipline - based Learning** our Plants and Animals Program is able to include criteria in the domains of Humanities and Science.

English is a domain that is also supported though this program. The students use their senses and observations to make generalisations and to explore the material that is provided however it is not specific to this program.

Domain: **The Humanities**

In the Plants and Animals program the students explore the contribution that plants and animals make to sustainable environments and how humans can use that information when looking at environmental issues. Respect for all forms of life are fostered.

Learning Focus: Level 1

Students explore how and why natural factors (for example, changes in the weather) and human activities (for example, the closing of a park) affect their lives. They develop basic narratives that link events in their own experience. Participating in activities such as wearing protection from the sun, saving energy, saving water, and recycling, they develop their awareness of environmental issues.

Standards: Level 3

Dimension: Humanities knowledge and understanding

They describe how people use and affect different environments in Victoria.

Standards: Level 4

Dimension: Geographical knowledge and understanding

They compare the various ways humans have used and affected the Australian environment. Students recommend ways of protecting environmentally sensitive areas in a sustainable way. They provide examples and evidence based on their inquiries.

Domain: **Science**

Within the Plants and Animals program the students use a sensory approach to explore the role of animals within their habitats. The students also explore the life cycles of worms and identify living animals in water and on land. The students are able to access microscopes to observe the minute structures of plants.

Learning Focus: Levels 1 & 2

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Science, they use their senses to explore the world around them; for example, day and night, the seasons, and living and non-living things. They describe their activities and observations using both general and science-specific language; for example, *hard, soft, long, short, big, small, strong and weak*.

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Science, they observe and describe phenomena; for example, properties of natural and manufactured materials, insect life cycles, phases of the moon, magnets in action, mirrors and seeing around corners, and light and sound from batteries. Students expand their simple [scientific vocabulary](#) by using words and terms for concepts such as *temperature, life cycles,..* they investigate ways of reducing waste in their classroom; for example, recycling and composting.

Standards: Level 3

Dimension: Science knowledge and understanding

Students identify and describe the structural features of living things, including plants and animals. They identify how these features operate together to form systems which support living things to survive in their environments. They distinguish between biotic and abiotic factors in their environment and describe interactions that occur between them. They describe natural physical and biological conditions, and human influences in the environment, which affect the survival of living things.

Standards: Level 4

Dimension: Science knowledge and understanding

They identify and explain the relationships that exist within and between food chains in the environment.

Strand: Interdisciplinary Learning

The Plants and Animals program is designed for students from Early Years (levels 2–4) but it can be adapted for other age groups. Within the Interdisciplinary Learning Strand the Plants and Animals Program is able to include criteria in each of the domains with the exception of Information and Communications Technology.

Domain: Communication

Students listen to information provided but are also asked to interact with their presenters, formulate questions and draw on their own personal experiences. Students are also asked to interact with their peers and adults in the creation of their pest repellent bag, and in exploring environments when locating mini beasts.

Learning Focus: Levels 1, 2 & 3

As students work towards the achievement of Level 4 standards in Communication, they begin to identify basic communication conventions in the classroom and playground such as being attentive listeners, facing the speaker, and taking turns. They learn to focus their attention and to listen without interrupting. Students practise retelling what a speaker has said to them and learn to ask questions when appropriate, exploring the interactive nature of communication.

When communicating with others, students begin to distinguish between differing contexts, purposes and audiences and they learn to modify their communication accordingly; for example, when playing with friends in the playground and talking to classroom visitors.

As students work towards the achievement of Level 4 standards in Communication, they listen attentively when required and learn to respond and interject appropriately. They learn about appropriate body language when reacting to a speaker and use feedback from peers and the teacher on their own body language to improve their reactions. They practise paraphrasing what a speaker has said to check meaning and ask clarifying questions where meaning is unclear.

Standards: Level 4**Dimension: Listening, viewing and responding**

At Level 4, students ask clarifying questions about ideas and information they listen to and view. They develop interpretations of the content and provide reasons for them. They explain why peers may develop alternative interpretations. They describe the purpose of a range of communication strategies, including non-verbal strategies, and evaluate their effectiveness for different audiences.

Domain: Design, Creativity and Technology

In this program the students use a sensory approach to explore the Gardens and investigate natural materials and how they can be used as natural pest repellents. It needs to be noted that the students will not be creating design briefs for the pest repellent bag.

Learning Focus: Level 1 & 2

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Design, Creativity and Technology, they investigate everyday, familiar [products](#) and recognise the basic characteristics and [materials](#)/ingredients from which they are made and how they are used.

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Design, Creativity and Technology, they come to understand that people use creative, imaginative and inventive thinking to help them meet human needs and wants. They enquire about and question their world, offering ideas and suggestions based upon their experience of working with [materials](#)/ingredients and [systems components](#).

Learning Focus: Level 3

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Design, Creativity and Technology, they begin to provide input into the development of [design briefs](#). They generate ideas from a variety of sources, and recognise that their [designs](#) have to meet a range of different requirements.

Domain: **Thinking Processes**

Within this program the students use a sensory approach to make discoveries which they are encouraged to share with their presenter and peers. Questions and wondering are encouraged and shared orally. Where appropriate suggestions are made for further study back at school.

Learning Focus: Level 1 & 2

Students practise using all of their senses to develop skills in making observations which they share and record.

Students begin to look for simple patterns in their observations by classifying familiar items and by looking for similarities and differences. In integrating information from their own observations, information from peers, teachers and other adults, and information from print and non-print texts, they begin to develop simple explanations for the phenomena they observe. These explanations – not necessarily complete – are the starting point for further questions and exploration.

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Thinking Processes, they explore the community and environment around them, and increasingly consider contexts and information which lie beyond their immediate experience. Questions and wondering are encouraged, recorded and shared, and become the basis for further learning.

Standard: Level 3

Dimension: Reasoning, processing and inquiry

At Level 3, students collect information from a range of sources to answer their own and others' questions. They question the validity of sources when appropriate. They apply thinking strategies to organise information and concepts in a variety of contexts, including problem solving activities. They provide reasons for their conclusions