I'm always amazed by the wonders of nature.

For the animals that live here, my backyard serves as their habitat.

It provides the food, water, and shelter they need to survive.
From D.A.'s Notebook

All Living Things Need Energy
Energy is what makes things move or change. It's the stuff we need in order to walk, run, think, breathe, eat, grow - and do everything else! Where do we get energy? From the food we eat!
Food has energy that is stored inside of it.

Let There Be Light
by Wanda

The sun is the source of energy for all living things: plants and animals. Heat from the sun keeps our planet warm. Light helps plants make the food energy that all living things depend on to live and grow.

From The Magic School Bus Chapter Book: Food Chain Frenzy
Hurt No Living Thing

Hurt no living thing;
Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.

—Christina Georgina Rossetti

The Egg

If you listen very carefully, you’ll hear the chicken hatching.
At first there scarcely was a sound, but now a steady scratching;
and now the egg begins to crack, the scratching begins to quicken,
as anxiously we all await the exit of the chicken.

And now a head emerges from the darkness of the egg,
and now a bit of fluff appears, and now a tiny leg,
and now the chicken’s out at last, he’s shaking himself loose.
But, wait a minute, that’s no chicken... goodness, it’s a goose.

—Jack Prelutsky

from the National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry
Oysters are creatures without any features.

from *Zoo Doings: Animal Poems* by Jack Prelutsky
Water in Your Life

You may not think that there is any water when you look around your classroom. Yet there is lots of water in your classroom. Like animals and plants, people’s bodies are made up mostly of water. Two-thirds of your body is water.

Like animals and plants, people need water to stay alive. People can’t live for more than a few days without water. They need to drink about one quart of water each day. People also use water to cook and clean and to grow crops. Many plants and animals live in the water. Water is very important to us.

What Is a Tree?

There are many kinds of trees, but all trees are big plants. Like all plants, trees have roots. The roots hold trees in the ground. The roots soak up the water and food that trees need to live.

A tree has a fat stem to hold it up. The fat stem is called the tree’s trunk. Inside the trunk, a tree holds water and food. The water and food go up the trunk to the green leaves. The leaves of a tree use sunlight to make more food for the tree.

from Quick Reads Level B
A Frog’s Life

From Egg to Frog

Watch a frog grow.

What would your life be like as a frog? You would have to know how to swim and hop. Frogs are amphibians (am-FI-bee-uhnz). Amphibians spend part of their lives in water and part on land. Most have smooth, wet skin. Most amphibians hatch from eggs.

Learn about the life cycle of a frog. A life cycle shows the stages in an animal’s life.

(1) Egg

Most frogs come from tiny eggs. A mother frog lays eggs in or near water. A frog can lay thousands of eggs at once. The eggs are in large clumps. A jelly coating makes the eggs slippery. That protects them from being eaten by other animals.

(2) Tadpole

A tiny tadpole grows inside each egg. A few weeks later, the tadpole hatches. A tadpole lives in water. It breathes using gills. It uses its long tail to swim and moves like a fish. Tadpoles eat tiny water plants called algae (AL-jee).

(3) Froglet

During the next few weeks, the tadpole grows legs and toes. The tadpole’s gills grow smaller, and the tadpole starts to grow lungs. It swims to the top of the water to breathe air. The tadpole starts to look more like a frog. It is called a froglet.

(4) Frog

The froglet’s tail gets smaller and soon disappears. Now the frog is an adult. It leaves the water and lives mostly on land. It breathes using lungs. It eats insects, worms, and snails. Mother frogs return to the water to lay eggs. Then the life cycle begins again.
What's the Big Idea about Water?
Living Things & Ecosystems Need Water

This text is provided courtesy of OLogy, the American Museum of Natural History's website for kids.

All Living Things Need Water

All living things, from tiny cyanobacteria to giant blue whales, need water to survive. Without water, life as we know it would not exist. And life exists wherever there is water.

All organisms, like animals and plants, use water: salty or fresh, hot or cold, plenty of water or almost no water at all. They are adapted to all kinds of habitats, from sizzling deserts to the freezing, pitch-dark ocean floor. The first living things appeared in the ocean nearly four billion years ago. Some, like our ancestors, adapted to life on land. Humans have figured out how to survive in swamps, deserts, and all kinds of habitats in between.

The ocean is still home to more kinds of life than anywhere else on the planet.
Plants are living things. They depend on water and light to help them grow.

But how do plants find what they need? They get it from the world around them!

Plants get water from the soil. They get light from the sun.

Many plants have roots, stems, and leaves. Roots keep a plant attached to the soil and help the plant take in water. Water moves up the plant’s stem to the leaves. The stem also supports the plant so it stays up straight.

Leaves take in light energy from the sun. The leaves use water, light energy, and a gas called carbon dioxide to make glucose. Glucose is a kind of sugar. It is food for the plant. Yes, plants make their own food! They use it to grow.
Everything that is alive needs energy. All animals get the energy they need from **food**. People are animals. Think about the human body as an amazing machine. It can do all kinds of things for us. Food is the **fuel** that helps keep the amazing machine running.

Plants use sunlight to make their own food. Animals are not able to do that. Some animals eat plants. Some animals eat other animals as meat. Some animals, like people, eat both plants and animals.

Since plants make their own food using sunlight, the sun’s energy is found in plants. The sun’s energy is very strong. It loses a lot of its strength by the time it goes into a plant.

When we eat plants, we get more of the sun’s energy than when we eat animals. That’s why it is good to eat fruits and vegetables. When an animal eats a plant, the energy is less strong. The animal also used its energy to find the plant to eat. When a second animal eats the first animal, it gets even less energy than the first animal got. The second animal used a lot of energy to chase its prey.

Like a car that has to be filled with gasoline, living things have to eat again and again. Instead of gasoline, living things use food as fuel.
Life of a Plant
by Risa Jordan

A plant will grow from a tiny seed,
Some water and sun is all you need.

First the roots grown underground,
They suck up minerals from all around.

Then come stems, some tall, some stout,
And next the branches spread about.

Leaves grow in all shapes and sizes,
Watch this new life as it rises.

Flowers bloom from buds on stems,
They are as pretty as precious gems.

Some plants give us juicy fruit,
Some have vegetables at the root.

New seeds travel to and fro,
By wind and water, on the go.

And the cycle keeps on going,
Soon new stems and leaves are showing.