

Characteristics of Living Things

Plants, animals and people are all examples of living things. Living things have a number of special characteristics that set them apart from things that are not alive, like rocks or clouds.

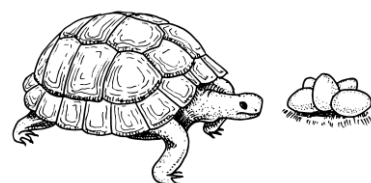
One of these characteristics is that they can move. Animals can run, jump, and swim, while plants can grow their roots towards water and their leaves towards the sunlight. Living things also breathe and need energy to live and survive. Plants get energy from the sun through a process called photosynthesis, while animals eat food for energy.

Another characteristic is that living things grow and change over time. Living things are able to respond to stimuli in their environment. For example, if it's too hot outside, our bodies might sweat to cool down. Animals also have ways of responding to their surroundings, like a bird flying away if it senses danger. Similarly, when a plant is exposed to sunlight, it will turn towards the sun so it can get more light for photosynthesis.

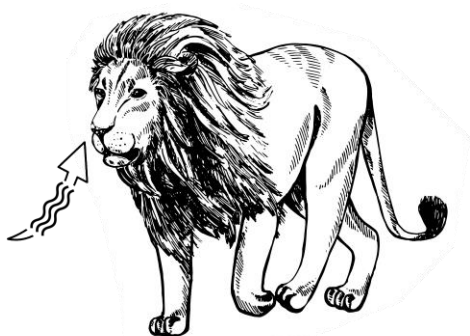


Living things can also reproduce. Some animals lay eggs, while others give birth to live young. Animals that lay eggs are called oviparous animals and include birds, reptiles like snakes and turtles, and insects like butterflies. Animals that give live birth are usually mammals, like dogs, cats and cows. Plants drop seeds as a means of reproducing.

Just like how a house is built of bricks, our bodies are built from cells. These cells are extremely small building blocks that work together to make up living things and help them carry out important functions. Some cells in our body help us see, others help us breathe, while other cells allow us to convert nutrients into energy. Cells are like the building blocks of life - without them, living things wouldn't exist.



So, if you see something that can grow, needs energy, moves, responds to its surroundings and reproduces, it's definitely a living thing!



Characteristics of Living Things - Questions

1. List 6 characteristics of living things.

2. List 2 living things. What characteristics make them living?

3. Give an example of a non-living thing. What characteristics make it non-living?

4. Explain the difference between how plants and animals get their energy.

5. List 3 oviparous animals.

6. Choose an animal and explain how it responds to stimuli in its environment.

7. What important functions do the cells in our bodies do?

8. Why does the author compare cells to bricks in the second last paragraph?

Characteristics of Living Things - Answers

1. List 6 characteristics of living things.

They grow, move, breathe, take on energy, reproduce, respond to stimuli.

2. List 2 living things. What characteristics make them living?

(Answers will vary)

3. Give an example of a non-living thing. What characteristics make it non-living?

(Answers will vary)

4. Explain the difference between how plants and animals get their energy.

Plants get their energy from the Sun using a process known as photosynthesis. Animals get their energy by consuming food.

5. List 3 examples of an oviparous animal.

(Answers may vary) Birds, lizards, frogs, turtles, grasshoppers, snakes.

6. Choose an animal and explain how it responds to stimuli in its environment.

(Answers will vary)

7. What important functions do the cells in our bodies do?

(Answers may vary) The cells allow us to breathe, see and turn nutrients into energy.

8. Why does the author compare cells to bricks in the second last paragraph?

(Answers may vary) This comparison helps the reader to understand the role of cells in the make-up of our bodies and other living things.