

Characteristics of Living Organisms

Chapter 10: Living Creatures: Exploring their Characteristics · Topic 1

Key Concept

Not every living thing shows every characteristic in an obvious way — for example, plants do not move from place to place like animals, but they do show movement in slower forms, like leaves turning towards sunlight. A useful way to remember these characteristics is the acronym 'MRS GREN' — Movement, Respiration, Sensitivity, Growth, Reproduction, Excretion, Nutrition. Non-living things, like a rock or a toy car, may sometimes appear to move or change, but they do not carry out these life processes internally.

Quick Revision Notes

- Key life characteristics: growth, respiration, nutrition, excretion, movement, reproduction, and response to stimuli.
- The acronym MRS GREN helps remember all seven characteristics of living things.
- Plants show slower, less obvious movement compared to animals.
- Non-living things do not internally carry out life processes even if they move or change.

Practice Questions

- 1 List three characteristics that show something is alive.
- 2 Explain the meaning of each letter in the acronym MRS GREN.
- 3 Why might a growing crystal be mistaken for a living thing, and how can you tell it is not alive?