

DTALcon 2026.



FUTURE READY
INSPIRING IMPACT
VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Welcome to DTALcon 2026

**Making Science Accessible:
High-Impact Strategies for
Supporting ALL Students**



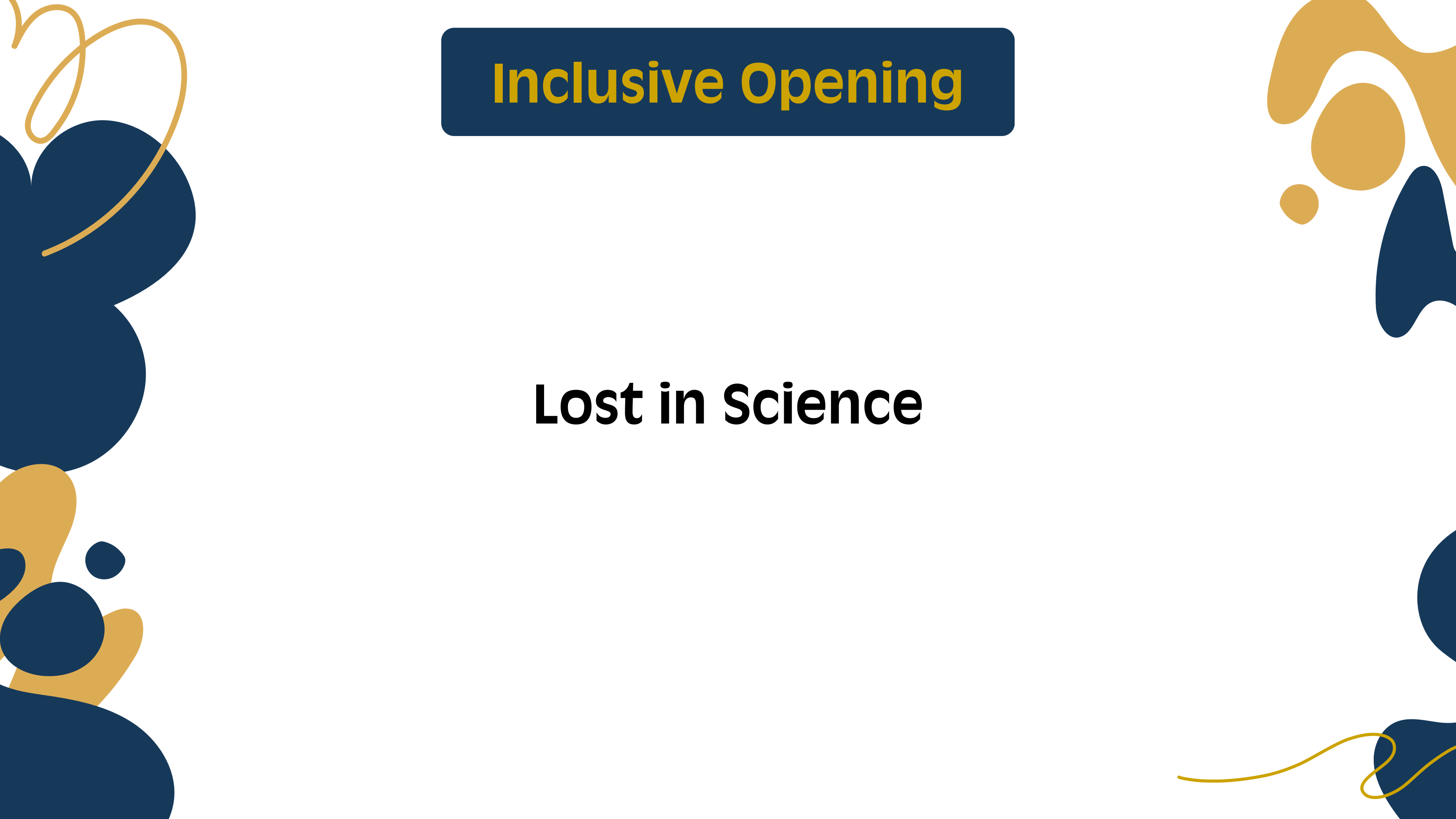
Introductions



Katie Dooley



Tatjana Roth



Inclusive Opening

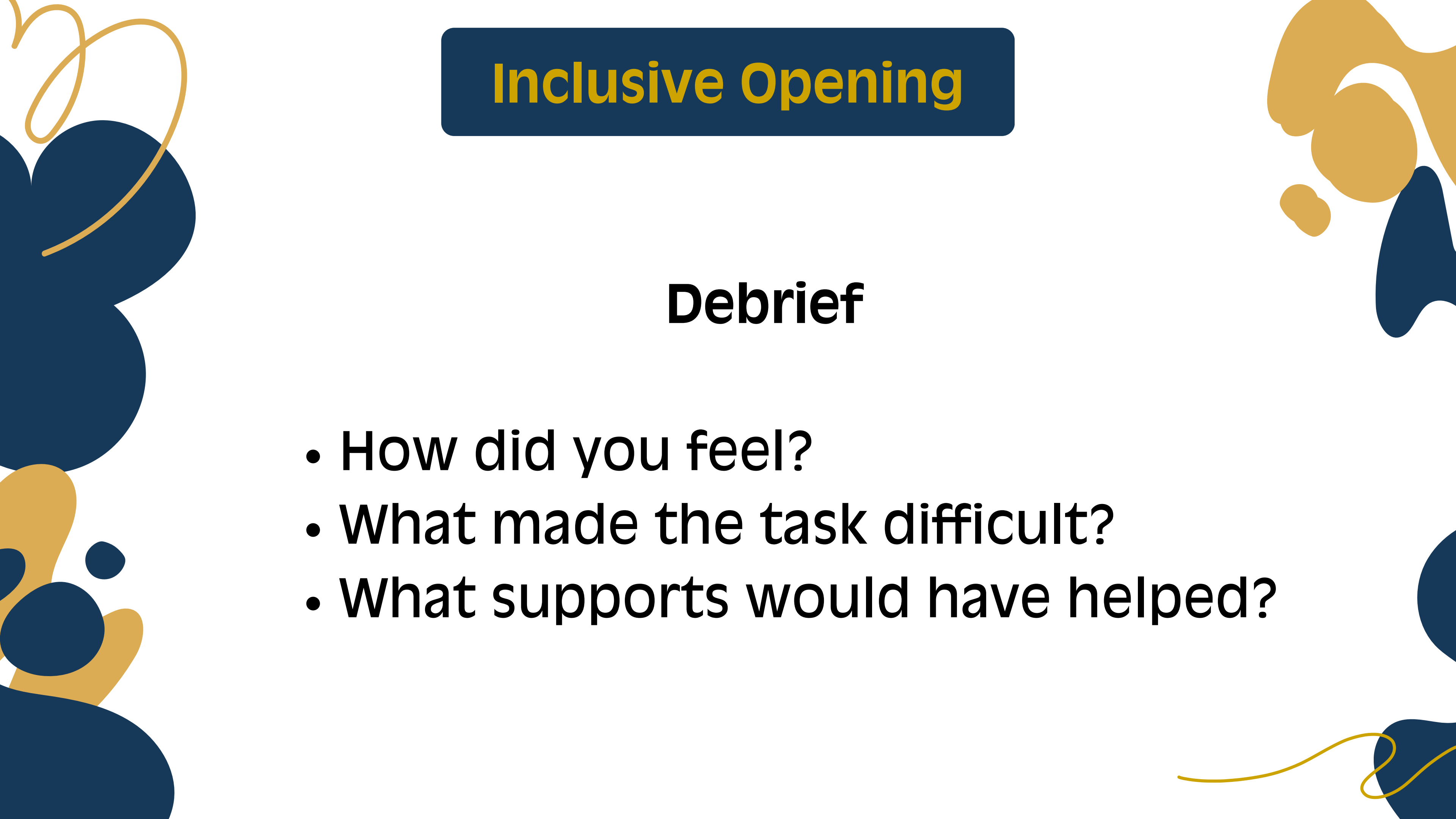
Lost in Science

Inclusive Opening

Ein Eichhörnchen ist ein **Tier**. Ein
Tier ist ein **Lebender**.

Sein **Lebensraum** ist der Wald.

Im Wald findet das Eichhörnchen
alles, was es zum **Leben braucht**.



Inclusive Opening

Debrief

- How did you feel?
- What made the task difficult?
- What supports would have helped?

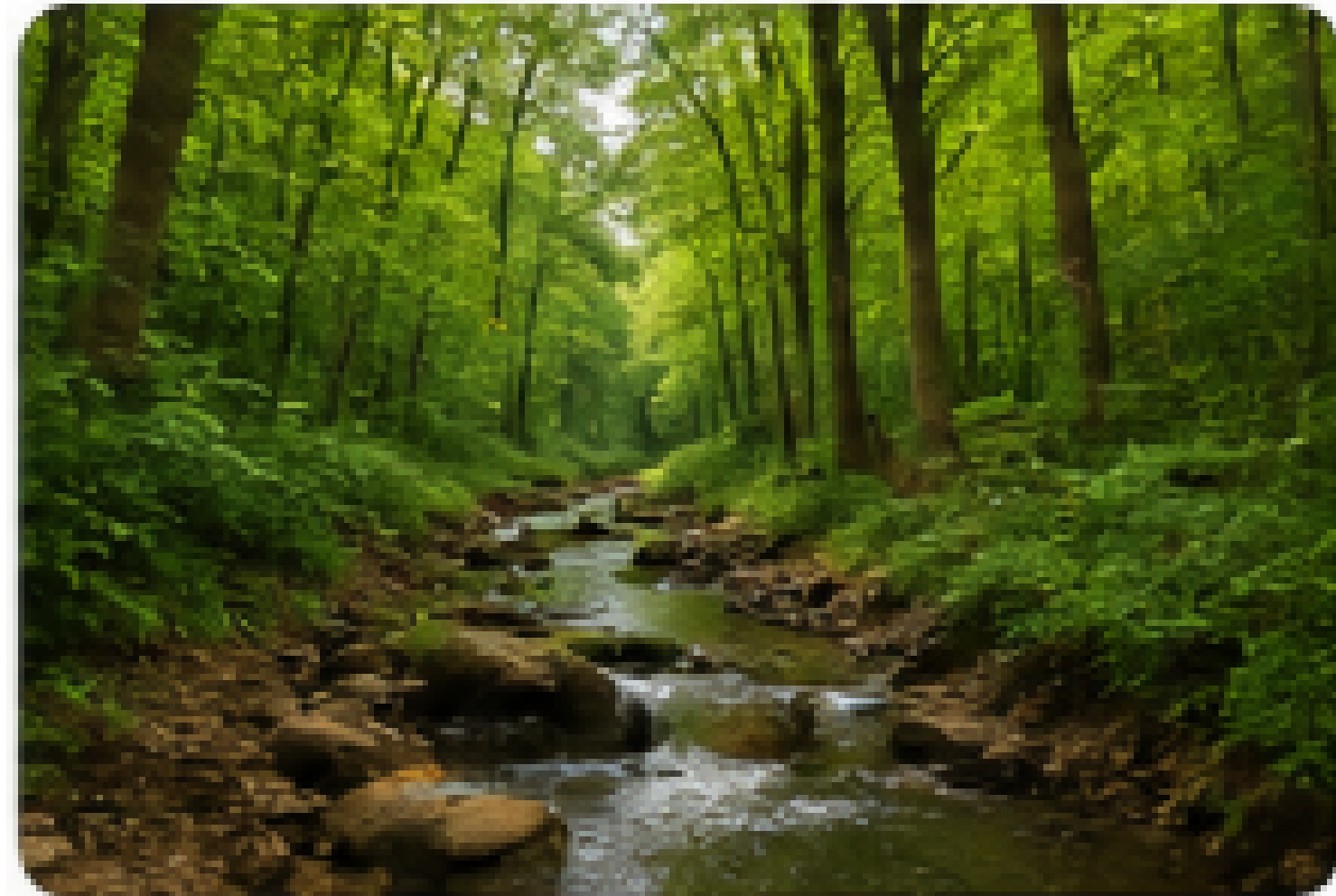
Inclusive Opening



Eichhörnchen
Tier = Lebender

**Ein Eichhörnchen ist ein
Tier. Ein Tier ist ein
Lebender.**

Inclusive Opening



**Lebensraum
der Wald**

Inclusive Opening

**Lebensraum
der Baum**



Unterschlupf



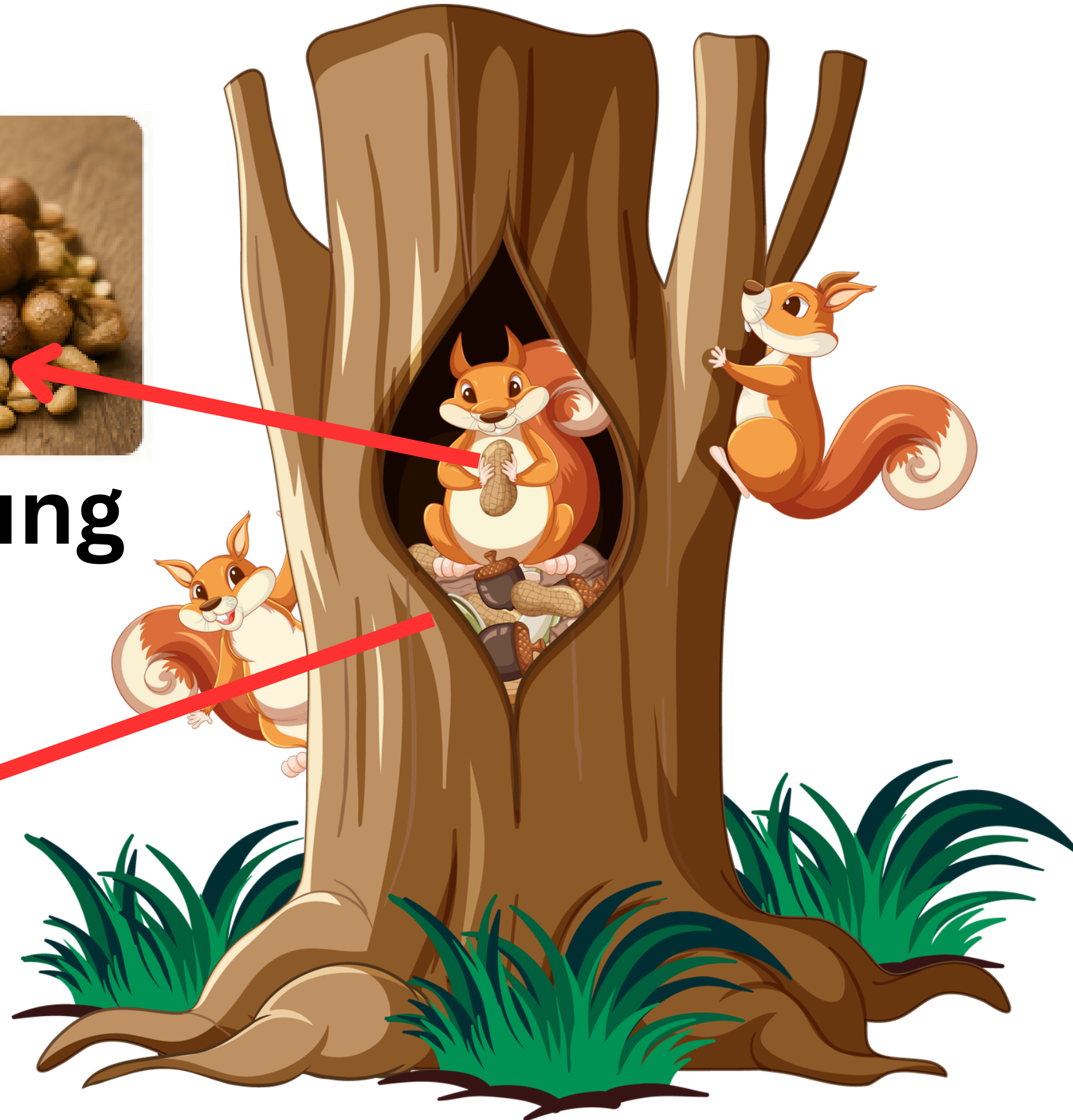
Inclusive Opening



Nahrung



Unterschlupf



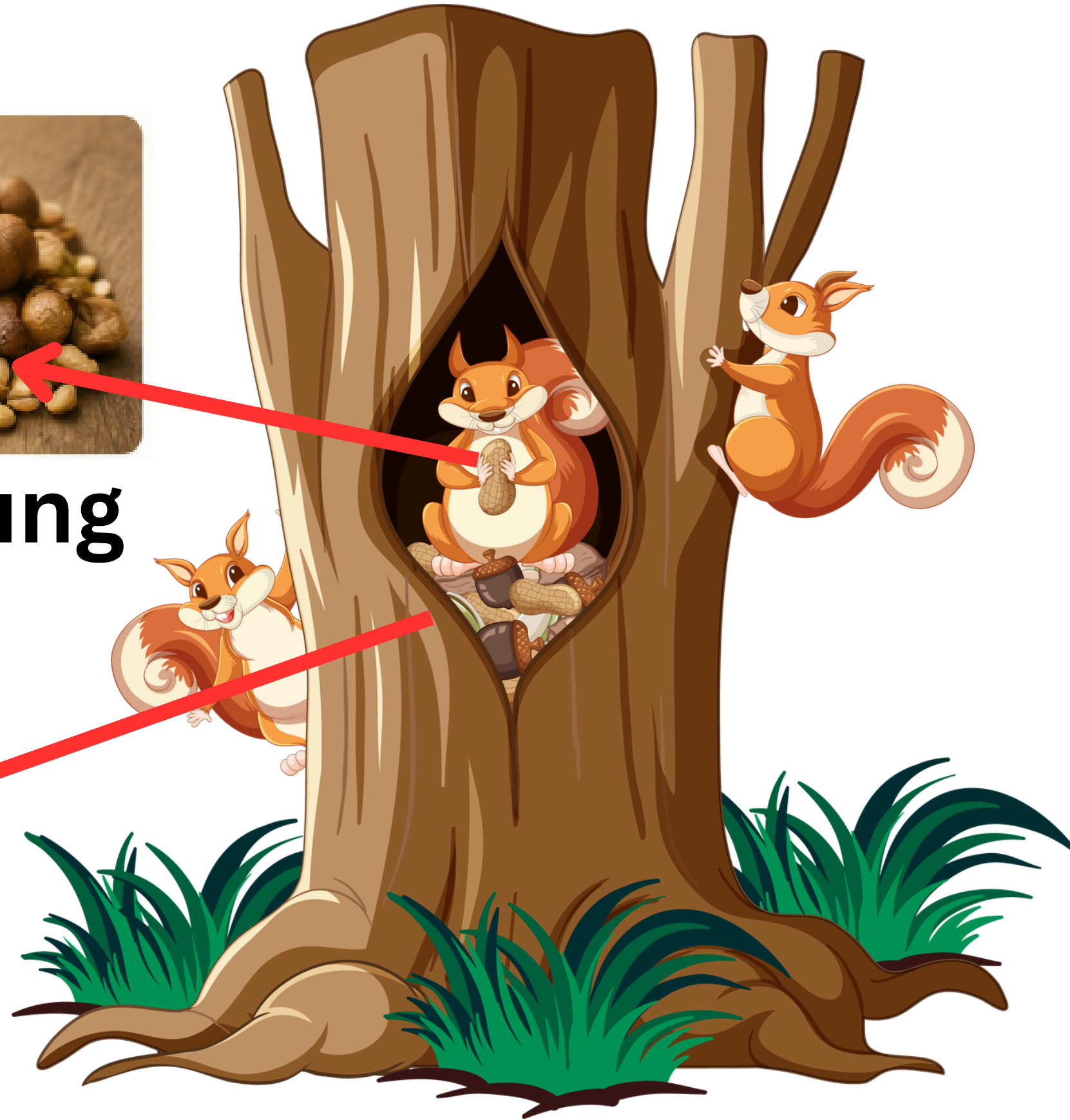
Inclusive Opening



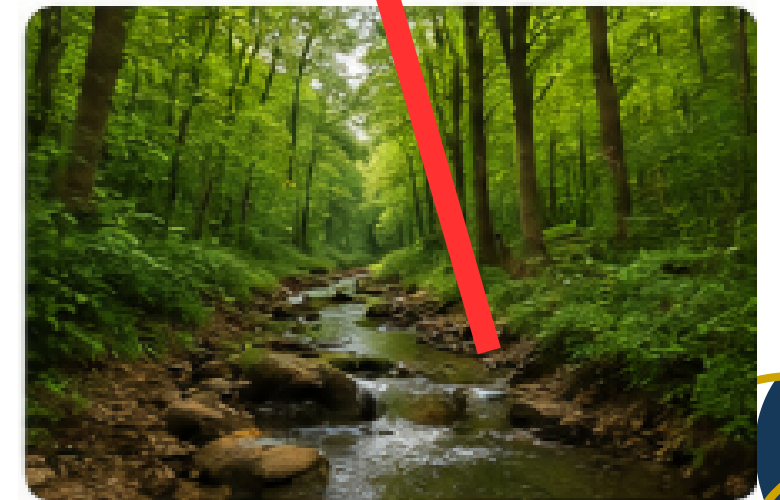
Nahrung



Unterschlupf

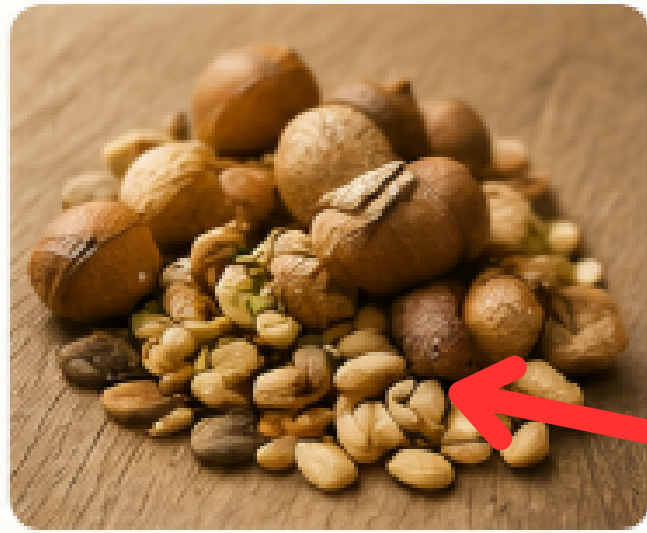


Wasser



Inclusive Opening

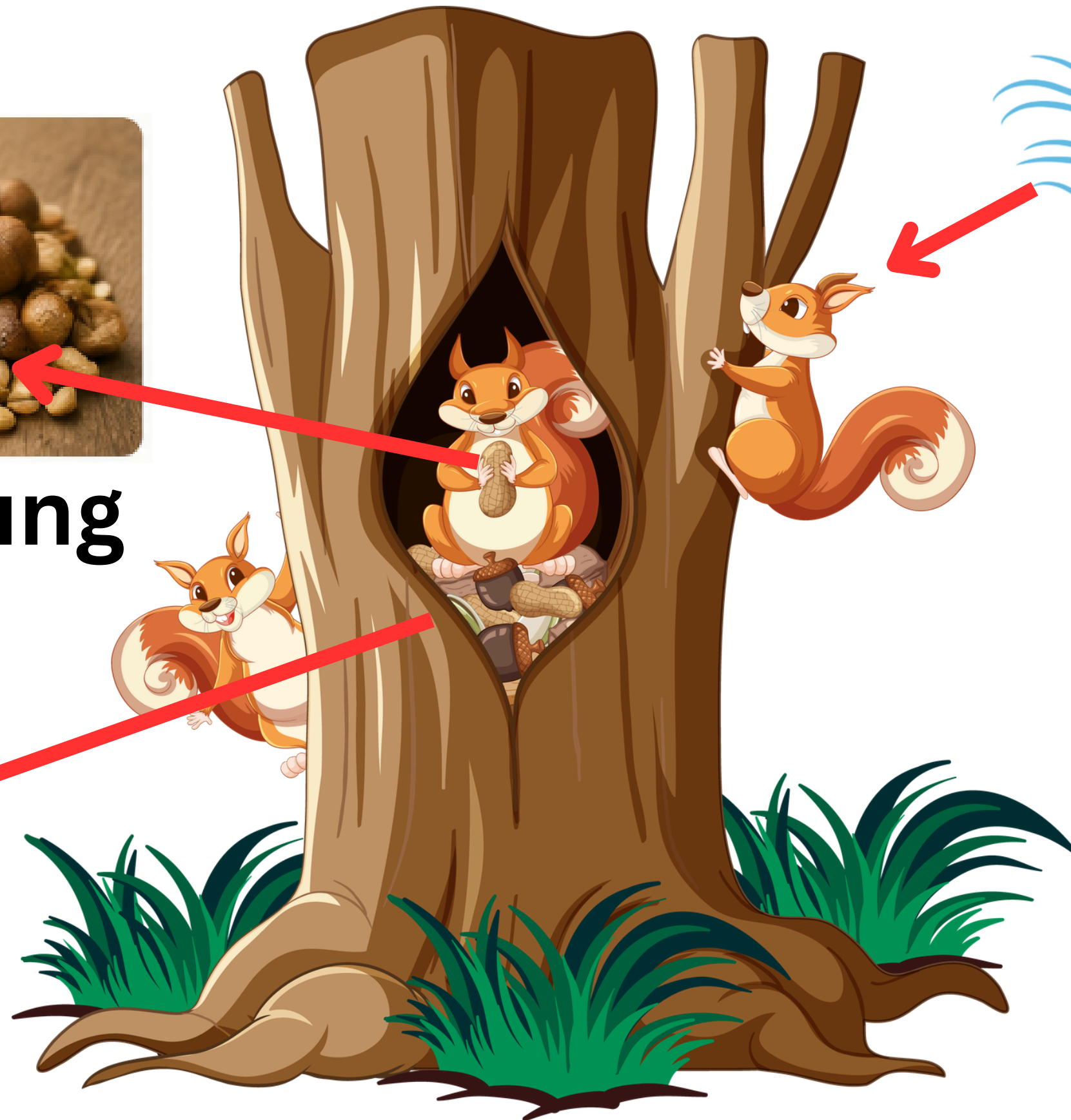
Luft



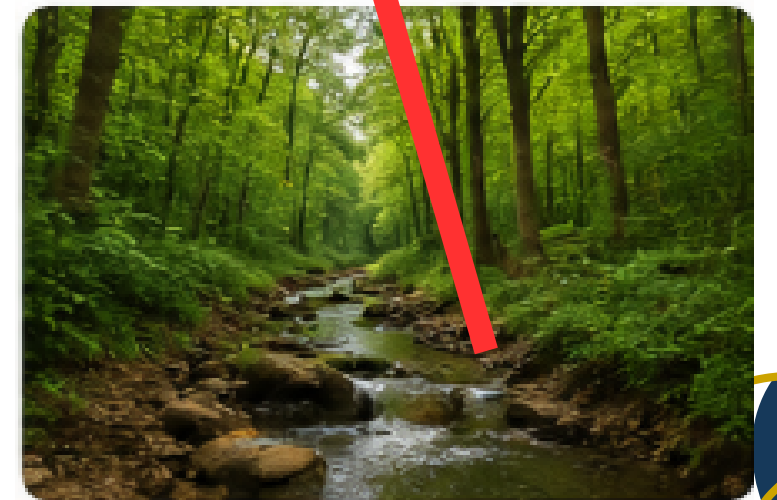
Nahrung



Unterschlupf



Wasser



Inclusive Opening

Platz

Luft



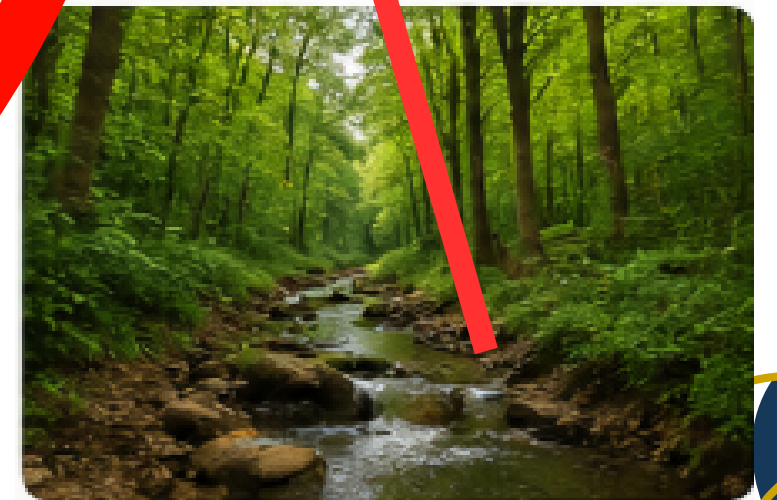
Nahrung



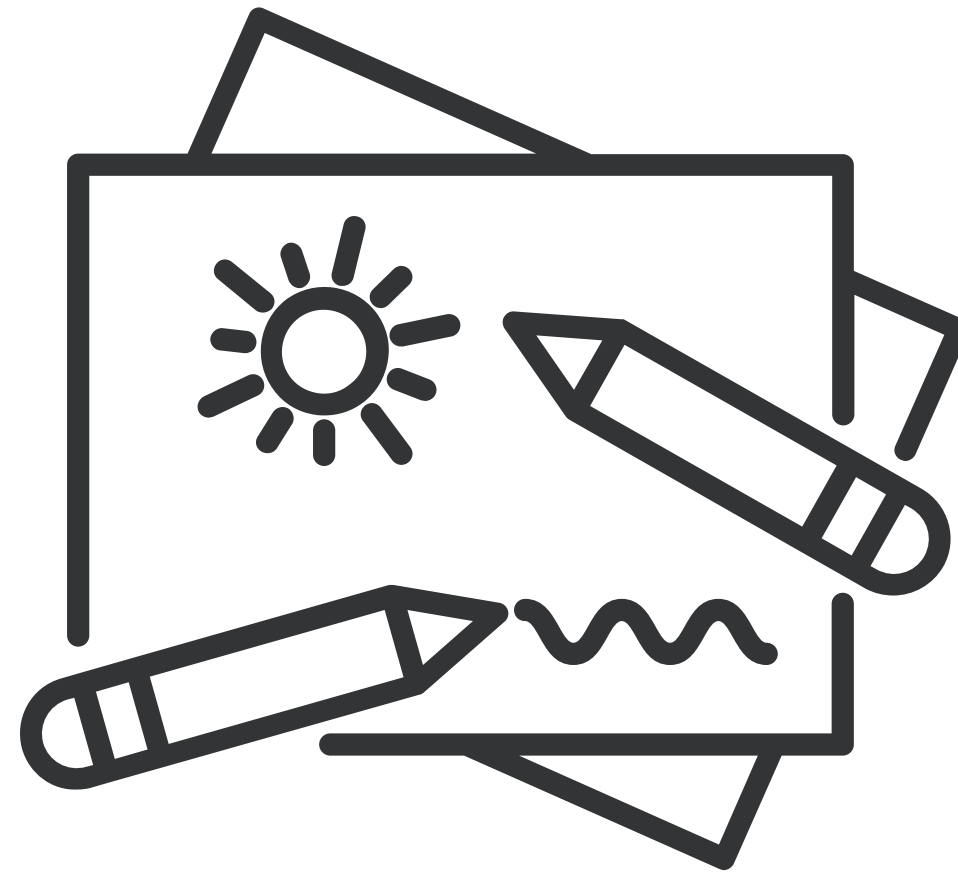
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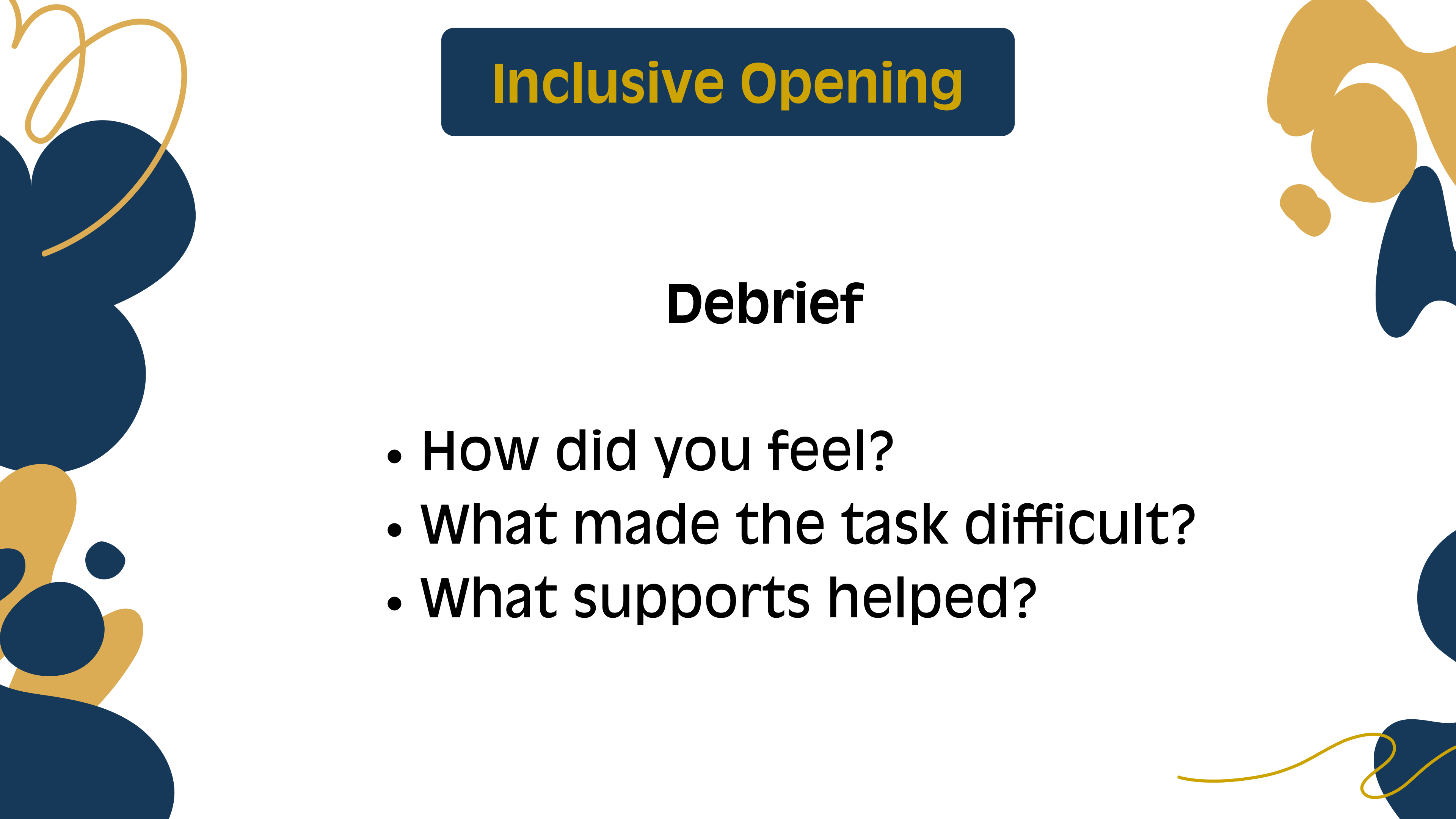
Wasser



Inclusive Opening



Du kommst dran!



Inclusive Opening

Debrief

- How did you feel?
- What made the task difficult?
- What supports helped?

Learning Intention

I am learning how intentional language scaffolds increase access to rigorous science learning so that I can support ALL students with mastery in Science.

Success Criteria

I know I've got it when I can:

- ✓ Identify the language demands within science learning experiences and how they impact student access.
- ✓ Apply research-based scaffolds to support scientific thinking without reducing rigor.
- ✓ Rethink science tasks to increase opportunities for ALL students to engage, communicate, and demonstrate understanding.

Future Ready Profile Connections



Compass to 2030 Connections

Compass to 2030 Strategic Action Agenda for 2026-2027



"You should be far more concerned with your current trajectory than with your current results."
James Clear, *Atomic Habits*

Equip Every Student with Strong Academic Foundations Supporting Future-Ready Skills by...

Maximizing the Impact of Tier 1 Instruction

- Advance instructional clarity and rigor by using learning intentions and success criteria to build every student's capacity to understand, monitor, and direct their own learning.
- Identify and strengthen meaningful connections between Future-Ready attributes and classroom practice to build a shared understanding of how to develop these skills K-12.
- Continue to expand the purposeful use of AI, strengthening secondary students' ability to think critically and act responsibly.

Strengthening Systems and Conditions to Support Students' Readiness to Learn

- Enhance students' sense of belonging through meaningful connections, opportunities, and structures that help every student feel safe, known, and valued.
- Expand the use of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) module to organize Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports as well as monitor intervention plans for reading, math, attendance, and/or behavior.
- Strengthen practices that help students manage emotions and be ready to learn, with an emphasis on building student resilience and recognizing how adversity may present differently across students.
- Reinforce access to and use of mental health resources through early identification and connecting families and students to appropriate supports.

Investing in a Professional Culture of Learning, Collaboration, and Belonging

- Sustain and strengthen Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a foundation for professional learning and improved student outcomes.
- Pursue opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, including cross-school visits and vertical conversations, as part of professional practice.
- Cultivate a sense of belonging among staff where every person feels known, supported, and connected to the mission.
- Grow staff confidence in using AI as a practical tool that supports their professional practice.

Engaging Families as Partners in Their Student's Learning and Success

- Examine what meaningful family engagement looks like at each school to identify a high-impact practice to advance this year.
- Continue to build school communities where families are welcomed, valued, and engaged as partners in the ongoing work of supporting students' learning, well-being, and future readiness.



Why Science is Different

What makes science challenging for EL students?



Why Science is Different

Science requires:

- Academic vocabulary
- Content-specific vocabulary
- Reading informational text
- Oral discourse
- Writing explanations
- Data analysis
- Evidence-based reasoning
- And more!

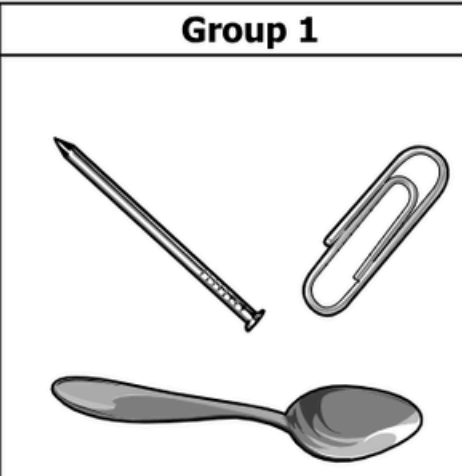
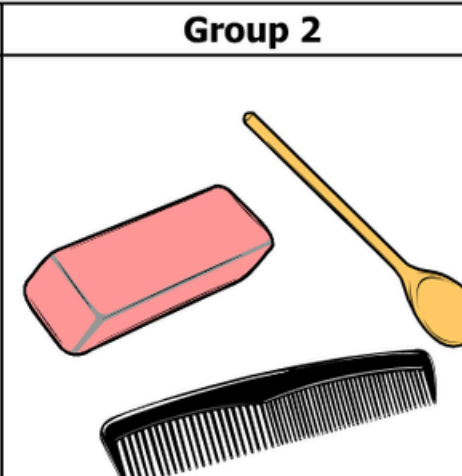
Why Science is Different

SOL Practice Item

TestNav User

GRADE 5 PRACTICE ITEMS / SECTION 1 / 8 OF 19 / 0%

Household Objects

Group 1	Group 2
	

Which statement about the objects shown is true?

- ☐ A. Group 1 objects are conductors because they force electricity to flow in the opposite direction.
- ☐ B. Group 1 objects are conductors because electrical energy can flow easily through them.
- ☐ C. Group 2 objects are insulators because electrical energy can move around them.
- ☐ D. Group 2 objects are insulators because electricity is attracted to them.

Immersive Experience

Think About...

- What is your role?
- How does this support culture and climate?
- What supports are in place?
- Are there other barriers that you came across?
- How can we remove barriers while keeping the rigor?



Immersive Experience

Dissolving Investigation

Dissolving Investigation

Name: _____

Testable Question:

Which materials will dissolve or separate in water?

When I OBSERVE,_____.

Which of the five senses will we be using in today's investigation?

Notice and Wonder

Rice in Water	Salt in water
I notice...	I notice...
I wonder...	I wonder...



Immersive Experience

Debrief

- What supports were in place?
- Were there other barriers that you came across?
- How can we remove barriers while keeping the rigor?



Application Stations

1

**Visual
Supports**

2

**Structured
Student
Talk**

3

**Modeling &
Manipulatives**

Application Stations

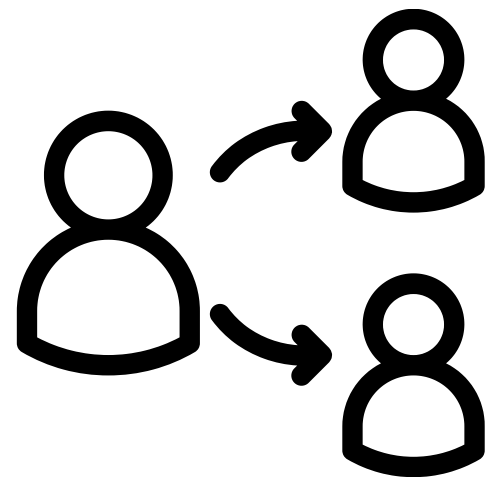
Rotate through 3 stations exploring “What is Matter?” 2nd grade lesson.

Explore different opportunities to create supports.



Application Stations

Share out.





VBCPS Resources

- Vocabulary
- Britannica GO
- AI
- Discovery Ed tools
- Canva

Questions & Thoughts



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Intentional Closing

Reflect & Commit

Reflection Prompt: What is one change you can make immediately to increase access for English learners and ALL learners in science?

I commit to:

- ☐ Adding structured talk
- ☐ Adding visuals
- ☐ Adding sentence frames
- ☐ Increasing modeling opportunities
- ☐ Other: _____

Thank you for joining us today at DTALcon!



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Thank you



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References

National Academies, 2018, English Learners in STEM Subjects: EL students need access to rigorous, grade-appropriate STEM, with language and content developed together.

IES Practice Guide, Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners: Supports academic vocabulary, structured discussion, writing, and content-area literacy.

WIDA 2020 ELD Standards Framework: Emphasizes high expectations, assets-based instruction, and teaching language through content, including science.

VDOE 2018 Science SOLs/SEPs: SEPs are embedded directly into science concepts, including questioning, modeling, investigating, data analysis, explanations, and argument from evidence.

Virginia Department of Education. (n.d.). English learners. Virginia Department of Education. <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/road-to-readiness-school-performance-and-support-framework-resource-hub/supporting-virginia-learners/educator-supports/english-learners>

