

Trees and Resilience



Lesson Overview

Trees form communities just like humans form communities!

1. How can we connect with trees?
2. What can we observe about trees?
3. How do trees form connections with each other and communicate?

This is your chance to get to know a tree personally and learn about their ways of communicating with the world – without words!

Use the template on the last page (page 4) for your observations in the field!

Notes for Parents/Teachers

- This can be a self-guided activity for older students. Younger students would be able to do all the outdoor explorations but may need help with reading the featured article.

Age Group:

- 6th-12th grade

Total Time Needed:

- 1-2 hours

Materials Needed

- Paper
- Pencil/pen
- Timer/watch
- Notebook
- Printed or hand-copied “I Notice, I Wonder” sheet

See more from MOSS Adventure Learning at moss.uidaho.edu/adventure

Trees and Resilience

Step 1: Gather materials to explore a tree

- Gather materials for your tree exploration:
- 1. Either print out the attached “I Notice, I Wonder, It Reminds Me Of” template, or copy the template by hand onto your own piece of paper. Take that with you, along with something to write on and something to write with.
- 2. Bring a watch or timer.
- Go outside and look for trees! When you find an interesting tree, move on to step 2!

Step 2: I Notice, I Wonder, It Reminds Me Of

- Use your “I Notice, I Wonder” template to write observations about your tree. For at least 2 minutes, write down all the things you notice about your tree. Use the entire two minutes—once you think you’ve noticed everything you can about your tree, look for three more additional things you notice and add those to your list.
- When you’re finished with the “I notice” part of your exploration, move on to the “I wonder” section. For at least two minutes, make a list of things you wonder about your tree. (for example, “I wonder how tall it is? I wonder how old it is? I wonder how it got here?”).
- When you’re finished with the “I wonder” section, set your timer again for 2 minutes and make connections in the “It reminds me of” section. What does your tree remind you of? (for example, “It reminds me of a ballerina. It reminds me of the way my favorite camping spot smells.”)
- After you’ve completed the “It reminds me of” section, take a least two minutes to draw your tree, in as much detail as you can. Often, drawing something can help us notice things about it that we hadn’t noticed before.
- After you’ve done your drawing, set your notebook down and put your hand on the trunk of your tree. Trees are amazing because they can breathe out what we breathe in (oxygen) and they can breathe in what we breathe out (carbon dioxide). Take a few moments to breathe deeply with your hand on your tree. Imagine it breathing in as you breathe out. As you breathe in, you can breathe in the oxygen it breathes out. Now you’re ready for step 3!



Think about....

- Think about ways you can engage all of your five senses as you prepare to explore the trees around you.
- Look for a tree in a spot where you can comfortably observe it for 15 minutes or so.

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Trees and Resilience

Step 3: Read and reflect about the hidden lives of trees

- Read the article 'A Web of Trees and their Hidden Lives,' <https://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2016/09/23/494989594/a-web-of-trees-and-their-hidden-lives>.
- Write a one paragraph reflection on the reading:
 1. Identify the author, source, and main idea or concept of the article.
 2. Write down two or three concepts that support the main idea and how they support the article's topic.
 3. Choose a line from the article that describes trees as social beings. Compare this concept with your own social life and reflect briefly on how trees participate in community.

Step 4: Revisit your tree

- Take your “I notice” paper with you and go back and revisit your tree in light of what you’ve just read. Are there any additional things you notice or wonder about your tree after reading the article? Are there additional things your tree reminds you of? Add those things to your observation sheet if so.

Step 5: Letter to a tree

- Imagine your tree can hear you. What would you like to say to it? Turn your paper over and write a short letter to your tree.
- After you have finished your letter, place your hand on your tree one more time. Breathe in and out with it. Perhaps you might want to thank it, too! Gratitude is a powerful part of resilience!



Think about....

- While you’re reading, reflect on the following question: Do communities of trees share any similarities with communities of people? What about your own community (family, school, friends, church, neighborhood, etc.)?

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<p>I notice...</p>	<p>I wonder...</p>
<p>It reminds me of...</p>	<p>Sketch!</p>

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