

A Tree in a Forest

Nº. 71

PRIMARY/JUNIOR

Science, Language Arts



LESSON SUMMARY

This is a cross-curricular language/science lesson which incorporates reading and writing to learn about the life cycle of trees and how they interact with their surroundings.



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Activity Information

Grade Level:	Primary/Junior
Subject Area:	Science and Language
Skills Covered:	Reading, writing, application
Estimated Duration:	Two periods - one lesson period, one work period
Materials:	A copy of "A Tree in a Forest" picture book by Jan Thornhill
Setting:	Indoors
Key Vocabulary:	Life cycle, producer, consumer

Curriculum Connections

Grades 1-4: Science

Understanding Life Systems

Grades 1-4: Language

Reading, Writing – this lesson touches on both the Reading and Writing strands of the language curriculum

Teacher Preparation

Have a copy of “A Tree in the Forest” by Jan Thornhill ready for the beginning of class. This lesson is ideally presented in the “Understanding Life Systems” unit in grades 1-4.

Lesson

PART 1:

Class Discussion

Introduce or review content-specific terms such as producer and consumer.

Begin a discussion with students about life cycles. Ask:

- What kind of things do we (as humans) need to grow and survive?
- What kind of things do you think trees need to grow and survive?
- How do trees provide us and other species with things we need to survive?
How do we help trees to grow and survive?
- What are the parts of a tree’s life? How does a tree begin? How is it different when it’s 200 years old? What sorts of things might happen to it throughout its life?

PART 2:

Read “A Tree in the Forest” out loud. Be sure to read slowly, show the pictures, and define any vocabulary that might be confusing to students.

PART 3:**Write a Story**

Tell students that they will write their own creative story about the life of a tree. The story can either be told by the tree or told in third person (you can touch on point-of-view/narrative from the Language curriculum here). Encourage students to be creative in their stories and use descriptive vocabulary. The stories should include:

- At least one instance of your tree providing something for wildlife
- At least one instance of your tree providing something for humans
- At least one instance of human involvement helping your tree
- At least one instance of human and/or wildlife involvement harming your tree in some way

If there are lots of trees in the schoolyard, you can take students for a walk outside and they can each pick a tree to write a story about.

Students can start working on their stories at the end of the first period if there is time, and it's suggested to give students an additional full period of work to complete their stories.

When complete, some consolidation ideas are:

- Group story share – put students into groups of 3-4, each one will read their story to their group members
- Class story share – each student can present their story to the whole class
- Create books – students can create a cover (using art) and bind their story book using pipe cleaners, then put them on the classroom bookshelf

Extensions

- Create a collage or storyboard depicting their tree's life cycle using pencil crayons, pastels, or paint.
- Create a dramatization or series of tableaux portraying various points in their tree's life cycle.
- If you have access to tree cookies, bring some in and students can analyze the tree's life. How old was it? Did it experience forest fires or disease? How old was it when it experienced a fire?