



LESSON SUMMARY

Students will explore the importance of plants to other living things by investigating a particular thing made from trees.

Activity Information

Estimated Duration: Two class periods (one for discussion and research; one for presentations)

Materials: Pencils, clipboards

Setting: Indoors

Key Vocabulary: Pulp, deciduous, coniferous

Teacher Background

Have you ever really thought about where certain products come from? Just sit down, look around and reflect on how something is actually made. It's not the result of a magic trick – that bookshelf or chair did not just appear. Many things originated from trees. What about the book on that bookshelf? Same thing: the pages are made from pulp, which came from a tree.

There are many products in our lives that originate from nature, whether plants or animals. Many of the medicines we take come from trees and other plants. The Rosy periwinkle flower is the source of a cancer drug; a form of aspirin comes from the willow tree. Much of the food we eat comes from plants and animals.

Teacher Preparation

Photocopy the Weird Wood Products Research Sheet – one copy per student.

ACTIVITY

Step 1 Ask your students to look closely around the classroom and identify those things that began their lives as trees (give them about one minute). Tell them to look at structures, furniture, things hanging on walls, etc. Some hints:

- Seats on chairs
- Desk tops
- Chalk board
- Cupboards, shelves
- Posters
- Pencils, rulers, books

Step 2 Once you have established that there are many things that originated as a tree, break the class into teams. Ask each team to choose a product that is made from a tree. You can make suggestions from the **Products from Canada's Trees** chart or from the **Ontario Trees and Their Uses** list below:

Ontario Trees and Their Uses**Hardwoods/Deciduous**

Sugar maple	furniture to maple syrup
Red maple	furniture
Black walnut	fine furniture
Black cherry	fine furniture
Red oak	cabinets, flooring, furniture, decorative work
Beech	flooring, plywood, furniture supports
White ash	tool handles, baseball bats, hockey sticks, furniture
White birch	plywood, veneer, toys, clothes pins

Softwoods/Coniferous

Black spruce	pulp, newsprint, fine papers, kraft paper
White spruce	lumber, newsprint, fine papers, Christmas trees, kraft paper
Jack pine	pulp, newsprint, lumber
White pine	furniture, window and door framing, lumber
Red pine	telephone poles, lumber, pilings

Step 3 Explain to the teams that they will be completing a research project on their chosen product, from tree to product completion. Distribute copies of the **Weird Wood Products Research Sheet** for the students to use to guide their research and help them to prepare a brief presentation.

Step 4 As a class, students will discuss, compare and contrast how each of the products was created.

Evaluation

Have your students design a poster about one “weird” wood product, illustrating how this product originated from a plant and how humans depend on this particular plant.

Extensions

Have students conduct a more global investigation and look at plants in the rainforest. What kind of products and services do those forests provide? Students can learn about plants that provide medicines, as well as plants that provide other products.

Download a copy of our Weird Wood Flashcards have have students discover some of the ways they consume wood and wood by-products.

WEIRD WOOD PRODUCTS**Research Sheet**

Student Names:

Our product made from trees is:

Our product is used for:

The kinds of trees that our product comes from are:

The parts of the tree used to make our product are:

Our product **looks like** / **does not look like** it comes from a tree (circle one).

How our product is made:

If there were no trees, we would suggest using the following to make our product:
(If your product could not be made, please state that.)

PRODUCTS FROM CANADA'S TREES

Excerpted from A Forestry Manual for Ontario Secondary School Teachers by G.A.R. Morrison

