

Tree Detectives

Learners explore trees near their school, playground, or a local park – spotting, identifying and recording different trees. They'll notice changes, wildlife living in or around the trees, and share what they find using communiMap.

Outcomes

This activity helps learners:

- Think creatively about their local area and its green spaces.
- Reflect on what makes a community resilient and caring.
- Share positive ideas for the future.

How to Set It Up

Start with a Tree Talk & Think-Pair-share

Ask learners what types of trees they can name, and discuss with a partner or group how trees change with the seasons. They might discuss how leaves change colour or fall from trees in Autumn. Or perhaps they'll mention flowers blooming, conkers falling on the ground or birds nests being built in spring.

Gather feedback from the wider group in a class discussion.

Head Outside

Walk around the playground or a local green space and challenge learners to spot different tree sizes, bark textures, leaves or seeds. Have them estimate the width and height of the tree (you could measure the tree's width if you have measuring tapes – measuring kits available on request by emailing ws2gallantpublic@gmail.com). Get them to note down any signs of wildlife, including nests, insects and birds.

Questions you could ask as the explore:

If this tree could talk, what would it say?
How do you think this tree changes during the year?
What do you notice about the bark or leaves on this tree?
What do trees offer our community and what can we do to protect them?

Bark and Leaf Rubbings

To help your learners remember what they have seen, have them create bark or leaf rubbings of the trees they find.

When they come back to class, ask them to display their bark and leaf rubbings on tables or walls. In small groups, they can walk around the “gallery” to look at everyone’s rubbings.

- They should discuss what they notice: Which tree has rougher bark? Why are some leaves bigger than others?
- Each learner writes one comment or question on a sticky note and adds it next to someone else’s work.



Upload the class’s tree sightings and photos of rubbings to the Tree Co-Lab layer in the app.

Teacher Tips

Safety First: Remind learners not to create rubbings on trees with thorns.

Capture it Digitally: Snap photos of the rubbings and upload them to communiMap so that learners can share their detective work with the wider community.

Consider making a “**Tree Detectives**” class book or wall display to show the variety of trees and wildlife near your school.

Plus, Minus, Interesting (PMI)

At the end of the activity, guide learners to reflect on their experience using a quick PMI:

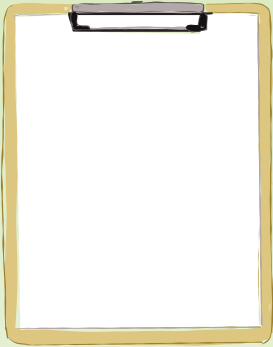
- Plus: One thing they liked about exploring the trees.
- Minus: One thing they found tricky or surprising.
- Interesting: One new thing they learned or would like to find out next.

Learners can jot this down on a slip of paper or share it verbally.

How to Make Bark And Leaf Rubbings

What You'll Need:

- **White Paper**
- **Crayons or colouring pencils**
- **Clipboard or hard surface**



For Leaf Rubbings:

Find a leaf.

Look for a dry, flat leaf with clear veins and place it under your paper.

Use the side of a crayon or pencil and gently rub over the leaf.

Watch the shape and patterns appear!

Try different leaves.

Use different types and sizes.

Label them if you know the tree!



For Bark Rubbings:

Find a tree trunk and look for bark that feels rough or patterned.

Press your paper to the bark.

Rub with the side of a crayon or pencil and you'll start to see the texture show through.

Compare different trees.

Are some bumpy? Stripy? Flaky? Each one tells a different story!