

Interview a Tree

This activity is designed for children in grades 5 - 8. You might be able to adapt it to younger ones or partner a younger child with an older one.

The objectives are to:

- learn the characteristics of a variety of trees
- use interviewing and research skills

Background:	All trees have certain characteristics - the area of the country, the type of soil (wet, sandy, clay), color and texture of the bark, height, types of seeds, shape of leaves - with which every tree can be identified. As the children learn these characteristics they can better identify the trees.
Skills:	The children should be able to read, write, and formulate questions.
Age:	Grades 5 - 8
Materials:	One paper for each participant with the name of a tree written on it, guide books on trees, paper and pencil for each participant.
Activity:	<p>Hand each child a piece of paper with the name of a tree written on it. Explain that they are to take on the identity of that tree. They need to learn everything they can about the tree so if anyone asks them any questions, they will be able to answer them. (allow 5 - 10 minutes for this part of the activity)</p> <p>Once participants "know" themselves, have the children pair-up and interview each other. You may want to explain what a news reporter would do before an interview: prepare a list of questions based on who, what, where, when, why and how. (allow about 10 minutes for the interviews)</p> <p>Now have the children introduce the "tree" they interviewed. If this is being done as part of a classroom activity, you may want them to write out a story on the tree that they interviewed.</p>
Discussion:	This is a good time to bring up the differences between trees. I usually include a pine or evergreen as well as deciduous trees. If you are at camp, you may want to discuss the trees that are at camp that don't grow in your city.

Adaptations:	Tape a paper to the back of each participant. They must ask questions of the other participants to guess the name of the tree that is on their back. The questions must be in the form that can only be answered with yes or no. Each participant has a field guide to look up the tree that is on the other participants' backs and the clues that they are given about the tree on their back.
Junior Badge:	Ecology #6
Resources:	<i>Trees: A Guide to Familiar American Trees</i> <i>A Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs</i>

This activity is based on Interview a Spider from Project Wild.