



Every Tree Tells a Story

Primary School Activity Kit

Edition 2 – March 2026

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Teachers Notes and Resources



Notes for Teachers




Every Tree Tells a Story was inspired by COP26 and is now 5 years old. The project engages people with their trees, through story telling, often using postcards. This teaching pack aims to help getting children to think about trees and what they mean. What stories do children, families, community members have about trees?

Let's create an opportunity to record this by whatever means children choose to express themselves: photos, pictures, writing, vlogs, short films.

Some prompts are given below. These can be shared with the children. However, the prompt is whatever inspires them to record their ideas. The chosen method is up to you/them!

Teaching and Classroom Resources



A story about a Scottish Tree for each month of the year with supporting folklore, recipes, and facts each tree (English and Gaelic)

https://www.owlscotland.org//resources/resource-library/tree_stories

Woodland activities postcards

https://owlscotland.org/images/uploads/resources/files/postcard4_Carried_Away.pdf

Gaelic Tree alphabet and poem

<https://forestryandland.gov.scot/learn/trees/tree-resources?highlight=gaelic>

<https://darachcroft.com/news/the-gaelic-tree-alphabet>



Teaching and Classroom Resources

Some different fairy tales, with audio and text including The Fox and the Crow, Hansel & Gretel featuring trees and woods – also available in Spanish, French, Italian & German

<https://www.thefablecottage.com/english>

Different (African) stories <https://storybookscanada.ca> – in multiple languages – some of which feature trees very prominently, for example

<https://storybookscanada.ca/stories/fr/0052/>

(Great for exploring different languages!)

Tobar an Dualchais / Kist O' Riches is a website dedicated to Scotland's cultural heritage (in Gaelic, Scots and English) and features some stories / songs associated with trees

<https://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk>



Trees and Story-Telling



Every tree tells a story – trees play an important role in folklore and storytelling in many cultures across the world; from the Boabab or ‘up-side down’ tree in Africa, with many different legends being told to explain its appearance, to the woods that feature in many of the traditional fairy-tales, Little Red Ridinghood, or Hansel and Gretel.

In Scandinavian mythology an eternal ash tree, called Yggdrasil, supports the world. Here in Scotland the Rowan tree is said to have associations with magic and witches. Planting a rowan near your house was said to protect you from bad luck and evil spirits, with the Gaelic alphabet represented by the name of a tree.

Not every story associated with trees is based on legends and folklore, there are also many more recent stories involving trees. Anne Frank, in her famous diary, mentioned a chestnut tree that she could see from her hiding place in which she found solace and the symbolism of this has since been used in various projects, including one where visitors could leave their name and location on a, “leaf” showing their affinity with Anne Frank. Saplings of the original tree were distributed to different locations across the world as a memorial to the holocaust.

Trees and woods can represent different things to different people: a place to be quiet and away from traffic, noise and people; a place to run around and kick leaves in autumn. Trees can be meeting places, places for climbing and hiding, the providers of sticks for throwing, leaves for kicking, for providing shade on sunny days and a 1001 other uses.

Tree Story Telling Prompts




Every Tree Tells a Story – What’s yours?

We would like you to tell us a story about a tree in your life. This can be a tree you see every day on your way to school, trees in a park or wood, a tree that reminds you of a different place. Does someone in your family tell an interesting story about a tree?

Trees convert the carbon dioxide that we breathe out into oxygen that we breathe in, but they can be important to us in lots of different ways.

Trees can be tall or short, have fruit or nuts, be green all year round, or lose their leaves in autumn. All trees are different and many of the great storytellers have used trees in their tales.

Storytelling can take different forms. You can draw, write, or (with the permission of an adult) record your story. It can be short or long but it must feature a tree because, “every tree tells a story”.





Prompts and Suggestions

So over to you - what stories do you have about trees? You could tell your tree story by answering any of these questions:

- Are there any stories that you can tell about a tree or woods?
- What trees do you see on your way to school? Are they always the same? Do they change? Could you keep a diary of the changes you notice over time?
- What is your favourite tree? What do you like about it? What makes it special to you? Where is it? Is it in a particular place? What shape are its leaves? Does it have flowers or fruit? What does it smell and feel like? If the tree could talk, what stories would it tell?





Prompts and Suggestions



- Are there any stories about trees told by your caregivers or family? Are there any trees which hold special significance for them? Would they be willing to share their story with you? You could ask to make a video of their story.
- Can you build a model of your favourite tree (using bricks or materials around the house or school)? Could you use twigs or sticks to outline the shape? (Remember only pick up sticks that have fallen on the ground; trees do not like having leaves or branches broken off.)
- Do you have your own original question or idea about, “every tree tells a story”?