

ORCHARD ART: LEAF AND BARK RUBBINGS

Learn more about trees and make art leaves and bark.

This lesson plan was written by The Orchard Project, a charity that work in partnership with local communities to plant, manage and restore orchards in community spaces. These lessons are designed to be carried out in an orchard or wooded area close to your school to help students to connect with nature in a fun and practical session. For more information about us, please visit www.theorchardproject.org.uk.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KS2 Science (year 3)

- identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants: stem/trunk and leaves.

KS2 Art

- to improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials [for example, pencil, charcoal, paint, clay]

KS2 Literacy

- Spoken language: maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments

RESOURCES

- Orchard with young or mature trees, cagoules for wet weather work, first aid kit, whistle
- Camera or iPad – check device and usage permissions
- For blindfold game – 20 x blindfolds
- For leaf and bark rubbings – large crayons, A3 or A4 paper, depending on age of tree, clipboards
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WALK TO THE ORCHARD (5 MINS)

Make sure that the children walk in pairs and check they know who is person 1 and who is person 2. They'll work with this partner for the blindfold game and bark rubbings. When you arrive at the orchard, make your way to the centre.

INTRODUCTION (10 MINS)

Where do you think you are?

Why are there lots of trees here? What kind of trees do you think they are? Why do you think they're planted like this, with big gaps between each tree?

Orchards are a group of five or more trees, planted with the intention of providing food. They often have quite big spaces between them to allow people to harvest the fruit easily and to allow light to reach all the fruit.

THE ORCHARD PROJECT

In order to help fruit-trees grow well, we need to understand how they work. We're going to be talk about the purpose the different parts of the trees have – the leaves, branches, trunk and roots. We're also going to play games here and celebrate the trees by making some autumnal art.

(If there are veteran or fragile old trees) Do you have any grandparents?

How do we need to treat older people? Can anyone see any old-looking trees? How should we treat them?

Check they know to avoid touching any tree props or damaging new growth on trees.

BLINDFOLD GAME (20 MINS)

Check the children know how to behave safely in the orchard e.g. not eating anything or touching anything that looks very dirty.

I want you to meet the trees. Let's play a blindfold game.

Model playing the blindfold game with another adult, emphasising the care you're taking to avoid leading them into prickly plants or over uneven ground.

- Children to stand in a circle with their partner. Person 1 to come and collect a blindfold.
- Person 1 to put on a blindfold. Person 2 turns them around a couple of times so they don't know which way they're facing.
- Person 2 leads person 1, carefully, to one of the trees and counts to 20 while person 1 feels as much of the tree as they can. They then lead them back to the circle.
- Person 1 removes their blind fold and guesses which was 'their' tree.
- Now person 2 has a turn at being blindfolded.
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What did you notice about your tree?

How did the bark feel? Why do you think trees have bark? What is happening inside the tree? What is the trunk for? How does the tree trunk compare to a plant that dies back in the winter such as mint, nettles, goosegrass or chickweed?

The trunk is for supporting branches and ultimately leaves, lifting them away from grazing animals and towards the light. The bark is for protecting tree from the cold/insects/fungi/bacteria/grazing animals, surviving over winter, housing the plant's vascular system. Herbaceous (or soft-stemmed) plants like mint, nettles, goosegrass or chickweed do not have a woody stem and die back in winter. Mint and nettles stores their energy in their root systems, but the other two plants die completely and must grow from seed the following year.



BARK AND LEAF RUBBINGS (15 MINS)

What role do leaves have?

Why are leaves so skinny? Why do trees push off their leaves in winter?

Leaves act like mini solar panels and they need to be skinny so they can move easily to face the sun. They use the sun's energy to trap carbon dioxide from the air and they transform it into starch and oxygen. When there's less sunlight and temperatures drop, trees dump all of their waste into leaves and then push them off. It's their way of saving energy. Different trees have different shaped leaves - this helps us identify them.



Photo credit - Geoffery Kehrig,
https://www.flickr.com/photos/looking_and_learning/8081813597

Did you know you can often identify a tree by looking at its bark and its leaf shape?

It would be useful for us to record some of the leaves and bark patterns we have in the orchard right now. Let's take some rubbings of them.

Model doing a bark and leaf rubbing from the same tree and then get the children to work in pairs.

- Person 1 holds an A3 or A4 piece of paper against the trunk while person 2 does a bark rubbing.
- If there is time and there are any leaves available, person 1 can make leaf rubbings **from the same tree**, ideally on the same piece of paper. They should use the clipboards to keep their paper dry.
- Label the reverse of the piece of paper with their names, the name of the tree and the words bark and leaf, where appropriate. (This will be useful when they come to share the work in assembly, and later on if the work is displayed.)

TIME TO RECAP (10 MINS)

What have we learned about trees today?

What parts of the tree have we focused on? What are tree trunks for? What are the leaves for? Who can tell me something they've learned about orchards? What have you learned about trees?

Who would like to talk about what we've learnt and what we did, in assembly? What do you think people will think when they find our tree faces? Would you like to visit this orchard again? Why?

WALK BACK TO SCHOOL (5 MINS)