

‘Treemendous’ Trees

Activities for children aged 5–7 years

WWT has a well-established and well-loved education programme that we run across the UK at our ten wetland sites. We’ve designed these short activities based on one of our school activities. We’ve made it to connect you and your family to the natural world and help you to work with your children to feel great about nature and understand some of the things that WWT love and care about.

Why wetlands?

WWT works across the UK to save, conserve and build wetlands for wildlife and people. Wetlands are one of the most important habitats on earth – storing huge amounts of CO₂, providing a natural way of stopping flooding and serving as a home for huge numbers of different creatures.

This activity will help you and your children to explore the wonderful world of trees. You will discover some different types of trees and why they are all so important to life on earth.

These activities link to the National Curricula for science in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Stuff you need:

- **Structure of a Tree Visual**
- **Tree Cards**
- **Leaf ID sheet**
(see final pages of this document)

Note: Where you see a  this indicates a question to ask your child

Indoor activities

(45 minutes – Can be broken down into 3 manageable chunks)

 **Have you previously completed the Plant activity session?**

YES – Continue with **Section 1a**

No – Start at **Section 1b**

Section 1a: The structure of a tree

- Look back at the diagram you labelled showing the parts of a plant.

 **Which of these have a different name when they are part of a tree?**

The **stem** is usually called the **trunk**. It is much stronger than the stems of other plants. It is covered in bark that helps to protect the softer insides of the trunk.

The **flowers** are usually called **blossom**. The flowers of trees include 'catkins'. These look a bit different to other flowers.

Q Are there any other parts of the tree that weren't shown on the plant pictures?

Answer

The branches:

- Branches grow from the trunk of the tree. They transport water and nutrients from the trunk to the leaves.

If you want to reinforce the learning from the plants session continue onto **Section 1b**.

If not then skip to **Section 2**.

Section 1b: The structure of a tree

- Look at the Structure of a Tree Visual. This shows a willow tree; a tree commonly found within wetland environments. Get your child to cut out the labels and use the names to label the following parts of the tree: **Roots; trunk; branches; leaves; blossom**. Help your child with any they are unsure of.
- Now see if they can match the correct description to the each part of the tree.
- They can then stick these in place if they haven't already done so.

Answers

Roots:

- Anchor the tree to the ground so it doesn't blow away. Also soak up water from the soil.
- Tree roots usually spread much wider than the branches of the tree.

Trunk:

- The main stem of a tree. Carries water from the roots to the branches.
- The trunk is covered in bark that helps to protect the softer insides of the trunk.

Branches:

- Carry water from the trunk to the leaves.

Leaves:

- Produce food for the tree.
- Trees don't need to eat like animals. They can produce their own food.

Blossom:

- Makes seeds to produce new trees.

Section 2: Deciduous or evergreen?

Q Do you know what we mean by deciduous and evergreen?

Key word: **DECIDUOUS**

Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the autumn and re-grow them in the spring (in the UK). They don't have any leaves during winter.

Key word: **EVERGREEN**

Evergreen trees keep their leaves all year round.

- The shape of a tree and its leaves can give us a big clue as to whether it is deciduous or evergreen. The branches of deciduous trees tend to spread out further from the trunk. The tree has a more 'bushy' appearance. Evergreen trees tend to be narrower and often have a pyramid or 'upside down cone' shape.

Sycamore (deciduous)



Sitka spruce (evergreen)



- The leaves of deciduous trees tend to be flat and wide whereas the leaves of evergreen trees tend to be thin, narrow needles with a waxy coating.

Sycamore (deciduous)



Sitka spruce (evergreen)



- Use the information on the previous page to help your child to sort the Tree Cards into those that they think are **deciduous** and those they think are **evergreen**.

Answers

Deciduous	Evergreen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oak - Beech - Silver birch - Horse chestnut - Sycamore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scots pine - Sitka spruce - Douglas fir - European larch - Yew

Section 3: The importance of trees

Q Why do you think trees are important?

Get your child to list of as many reasons they can think of. Add any additional reasons from the list below that they may have missed.

- Trees provide food for lots of animals including humans. This includes fruit such as apples.
- Trees provide homes for lots of animals. Some animals build nests in trees while others, like insects, live in the tree itself.
- Trees provide woodlands for people to enjoy. People enjoy going for walks and bike rides as well as activities like watching wildlife.
- Trees provide shade for animals including humans.
- Many people burn wood from trees to keep their houses warm.
- Wood from trees is used to make lots of things like buildings, furniture, toys and paper.
- Trees make oxygen and help prevent climate change.

Sustainable woodlands and FSC

It is not good if trees are cut down and not replaced. It is important that trees are replanted as others are cut down. When buying paper and other items made from wood, look out for the FSC logo. This shows that the wood has been produced in this way.



Take it outside:

(15 minutes+)

Make friends with a tree (or stick)

- If you are able to access an area with several trees nearby you can 'make friends with a tree.'

- 1 One person should blindfold the other and then spin them round a few times.
- 2 Take them to a tree and get them to explore it really carefully with their hands, remembering the shape and features of the tree.
- 3 Take them back to where they started. Spin them round a few times again and then remove the blindfold. Can they find 'their' tree?
- 4 You can then swap over.

If there aren't enough trees nearby, you can carry out the same activity but with sticks:

- 1 Make a pile of sticks in front of you.
- 2 One person should blindfold the other and then get them to pick up one of the sticks and explore it really carefully with their hands, remembering its shape and features.
- 3 Place the stick back in the pile and give them a good mix up.
- 4 Remove the blindfold. Can they find 'their' stick?

Q Does your tree or stick feel special to you? Why?

- If your tree feels special to you, you could continue to visit it over time.
(I still have a special tree I have been visiting since I was a child).
- If your stick feels special to you, you could take it home and tie on other special things you find over time.

Leaf hunt

- Carry out a leaf hunt. See how many of the common tree leaves on our Leaf ID Sheet you can find.

Q Which is your favourite leaf? Why?

My favourite leaf

- 1 Ask your child to find a leaf that they really like. See if they can find a fallen leaf from the plant. If not, and if the plant has lots of leaves, get them to carefully remove a leaf from the plant, being careful not to damage the rest of the plant.
- 2 Ask them to hold their leaf up to the sky and observe it really carefully.
- 3 Ask them to try to store in their memory exactly what their leaf looks like.
- 4 Now challenge them to pick a handful of other leaves in the same way, mix them all up and see if they can find 'their' leaf.

🕒 How did it feel finding your leaf? Why?

- It is likely that by now this leaf will mean something special to them. They might like to take it indoors and press it so that they can keep it:
 - Place the leaves wrapped in newspaper inside a heavy book. Place more books, a weight, or rock on top of the book to add more weight.
 - Keep the book in a dry location. Check the pressing after about one week. Make sure the leaves are drying and not rotting. You will probably need to leave the leaves under the book for another one to two weeks before they are completely dry.

Leaf picture

- Collect leaves as above and use them to produce a picture. You can either do this on the ground (you could also use other natural materials) or stick them down onto a piece of paper (you could draw parts of the picture). See how creative you can be. You can find some great ideas for inspiration here: [pinterest.co.uk/pin/108016091036339118](https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/108016091036339118)

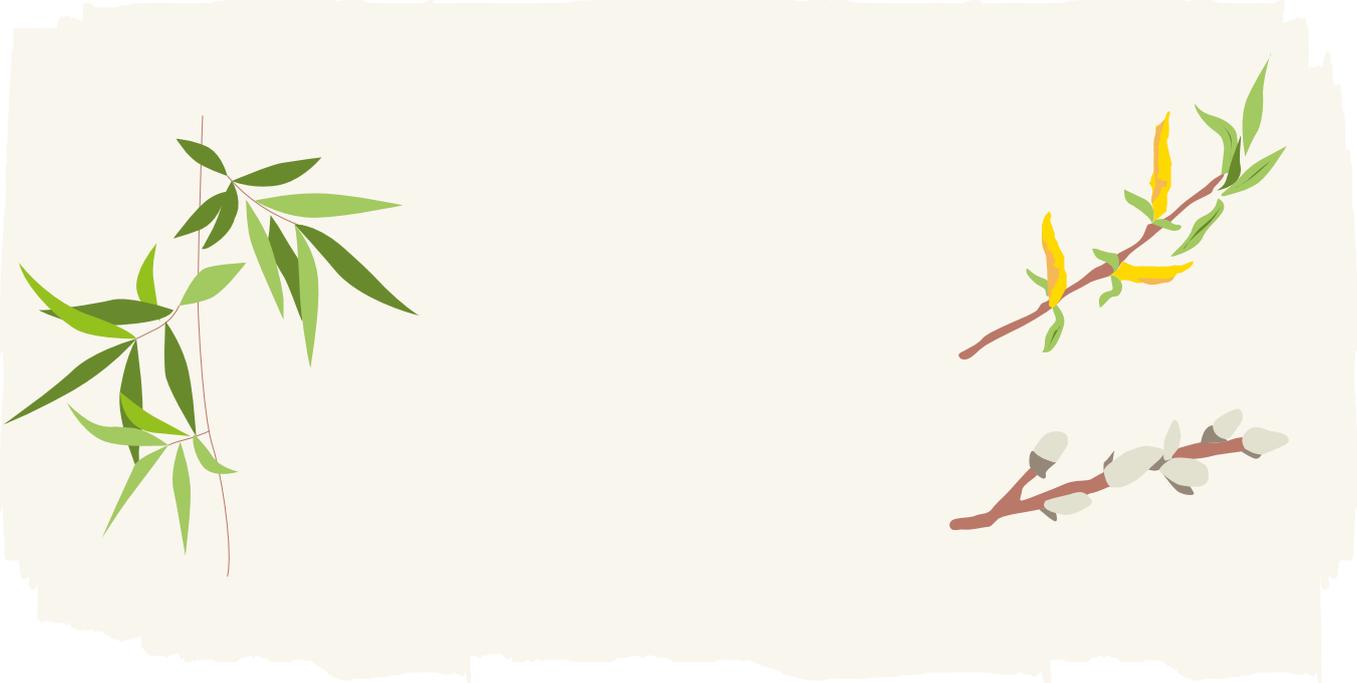


@WWTWorldwide



**Have fun and do share your work to our social media accounts –
we'd absolutely love to see it!**

Structure of a tree

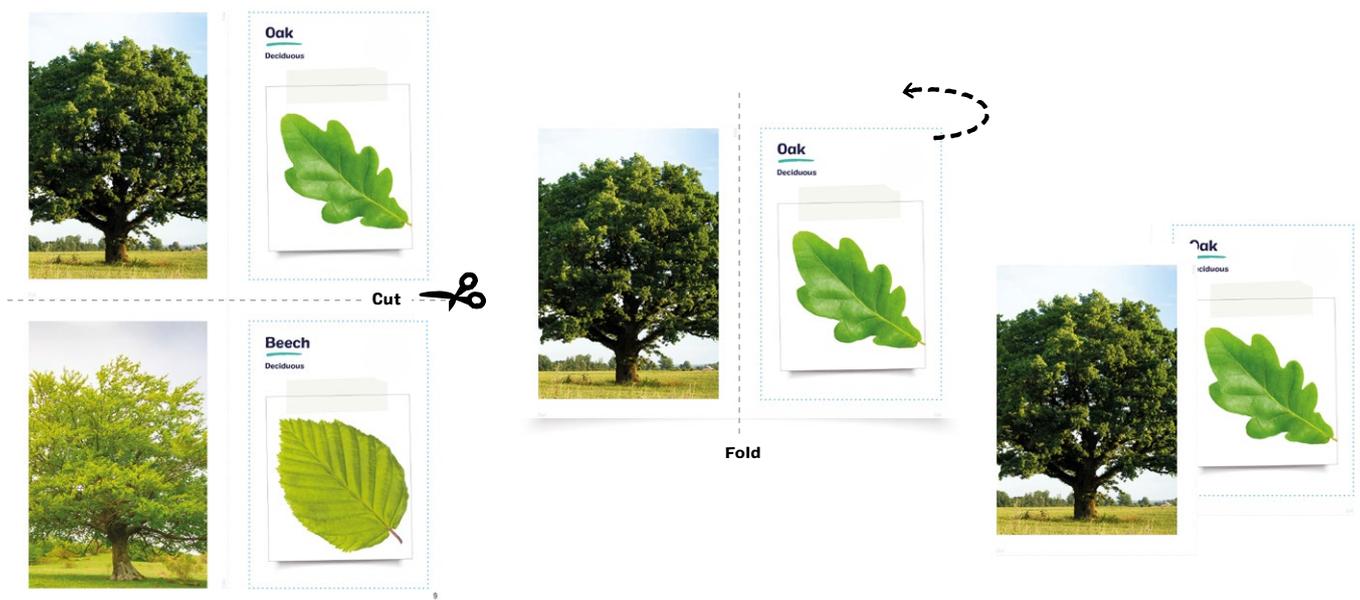


Structure of a tree cut outs

<u>Trunk</u>	<u>Roots</u>	<u>Blossom</u>	<u>Leaves</u>
<u>Branches</u>	Anchor the plant to the ground and soak up water from the soil.	Makes seeds to produce new plants.	Transport water from the trunk to the leaves.
Produce food for the plant.	The main stem of a tree. Carries water from the roots to the branches.		

Tree cards cards

- To make the cards, cut the line across the width of your paper then fold each half in half again so you end up with a picture on one side and the information on the other. Stick the two sides together with glue.



Fold



Cut

Oak

Deciduous



Cut

Fold



Beech

Deciduous



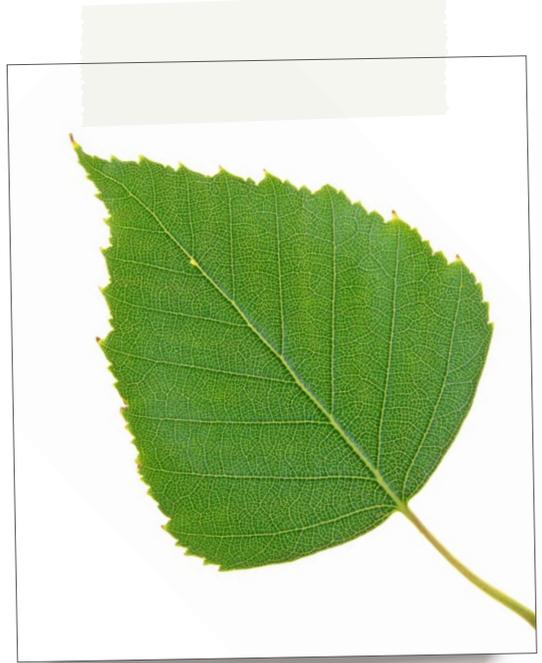
Fold



Cut

Silver birch

Deciduous



Cut



Fold

Horse chestnut

Deciduous



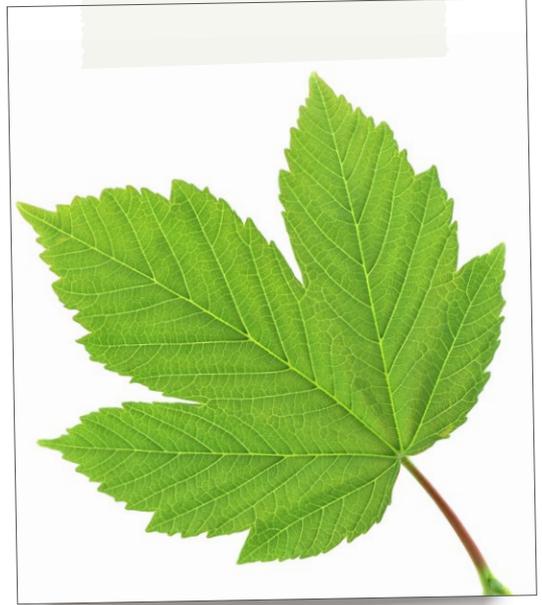
Fold



Cut

Sycamore

Deciduous



Cut

Fold



Scots pine

Evergreen



Fold



Sitka spruce

Evergreen



Cut

Cut

Fold



Douglas fir

Evergreen

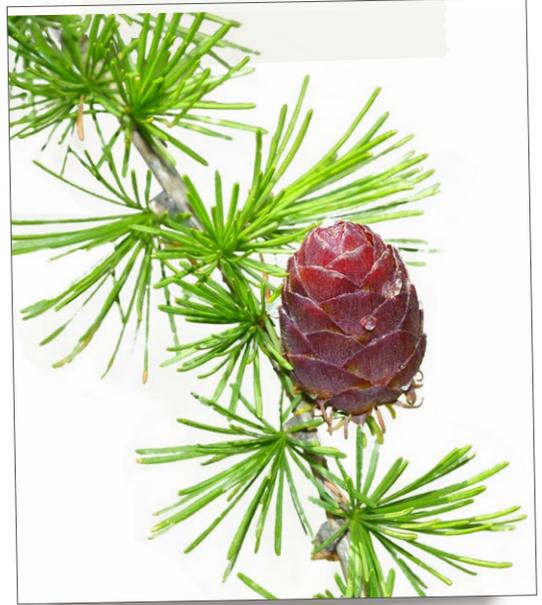


Fold



European larch

Evergreen



Cut

Cut

Fold



Yew

Evergreen



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Leaf ID sheet

