

CREATE YOUR OWN TREE!

Tree Structure and Benefits Grades: K-8

Overview: (communicated by teacher)

Now, that your students know the essential parts of a tree, create a tree sculpture/ model. It is important to remember that students should only gather items from the ground, please do not harm the trees. The trees can be created individually, in small groups or as a class. You can use items from nature or students can draw the parts of a tree on paper. You can place the tree parts on the ground or glue them to paper.

Method:

Now, that your students know the essential parts of a tree, create a tree sculpture or model to keep in the classroom. It is important to remember that students should only gather items from the ground, please do not harm the trees.

1. *Placing Roots:*

Place the roots of the tree near the bottom of the paper. Wherever they place them, the tree will have to grow from there.

2. At the top of the roots, draw a line horizontally. This will resemble the ground, or grass line.

3. *Making Tree Trunk:*

Take the thickest, biggest twig and arrange it on the paper. The bottom of it should touch the roots. This is the tree trunk.

4. Arrange the branches to the trunk. Longer branches should be towards the bottom of the crown, and smaller/thin branches at the top of the crown.

5. Attach all the leaves from one leaf type to the branches of the tree.

6. *Labeling and Introductions:*

Have students label the different parts of the tree or have them write a few sentences describing what they learned about trees.

7. Once complete, allow students to introduce their trees to the rest of the class.

8. *Optional. Show demonstration videos of other Earth Artists such as Andy Goldsworthy.



At a glance

Skills:

Critical Thinking
Discussion
Urban Forestry

Lesson Delivery:

(Best/Suggested method in bold)

- Whole group
- **Small group**
- **Independent work**

Location:

(Best/Suggested location in bold)

- **Outdoor**
- **Indoors**

Materials:

Necessary

- Leaves
- Small Branches
- Twigs or leaf stems(mimic roots)

Optional

- Markers
- Crayons
- Poster Board
- Paper Bag
- Glue
- Tape
- Pencil

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Modifications & Extensions

K-2*

Modification: Use Pre-Labeled Tree Mats

Provide a large piece of paper with labeled sections ("Roots," "Trunk," "Branches," "Leaves") to guide students as they build. Students can glue items in place or arrange them with adult help.

3-5*

Modification: Tree Diagram Journal Page

Add a page where students write the name of each part of the tree, then describe what it does (e.g., "Roots: suck up water from the ground"). This supports science vocabulary and comprehension.

6-8*

Modification: Add Function Labels

Have students not only label the parts of the tree (roots, trunk, branches, crown/leaves), but also write a function for each part (e.g., "Trunk: carries water and nutrients up the tree").

Extension: "My Tree's Name and Story"

After building, students give their tree a name and make up a short story about it (e.g., where it lives, what animals visit it, or what season it likes best). This can be shared with the class to support oral language development.

Extension: Tree Species Identity Challenge

After creating their model, students guess what kind of tree their materials came from (oak, maple, pine, etc.) using a basic tree guide or leaf shape chart. They can include this info in their project presentation.

Extension: Urban Forest Adaptation Discussion

After presenting their models, students reflect or journal on how trees in their community are adapted to the local environment (e.g., drought resistance, shallow roots for clay soil) and suggest what types of trees would best benefit their campus. Have students create a classroom "forest" with their finish products, to demonstrate the importance of biodiversity.