

FOREST LITERACY BY GRADE LEVEL

GRADES K-2

Primary students are active explorers and are naturally curious about their world. They learn best through direct discovery with hands-on experiences that engage the five senses. During the primary years, students develop the ability to approach the world logically, and their capacity to use abstract reasoning increases.

Students in urban and suburban areas may never have seen a forest in person and may have preconceived notions about forests based on stories or movies. Forest literacy activities at this level should aim to introduce students to trees and forests, focusing on the following guiding questions:

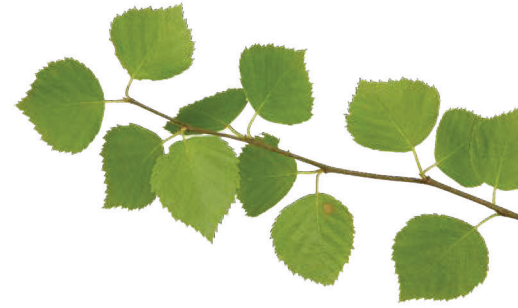
- What is a forest?
- Who lives in forests?
- How do forests help us?
- What can we do to help forests?

Giving students opportunities to be keen observers will provide them with a strong foundation for becoming good scientists and critical thinkers. Simple investigations inside and outside the classroom will help them learn to analyze results and apply their understanding to new situations.

Collecting and categorizing natural objects, and other hands-on activities, will help acquaint them with the natural world in general – and with forests in particular.



KEY FOREST LITERACY PLAN CONCEPTS FOR GRADES K-2



The following concepts from the Forest Literacy Framework have direct connections to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in the United States, to provincial science standards in Canada and to Social Studies standards in both countries. Note that many concepts also support English Language Arts, and Mathematics standards as well.

<i>Forest Literacy Framework Concept</i>	Subject	Topic	Core Idea	Standard (If Applicable)
Theme 1, A.1	Science	Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms	All animals need food to live and grow. Plants need water and light to live and grow.	NGSS: <u>K-LS1-1</u>
Theme 1, B.3	Science	Structure and Function	Plants have different parts that help them survive and grow.	NGSS: <u>1-LS3-1</u>
Theme 1, D.4	Science	Biodiversity and Humans	There are many different kinds of living things in an area.	NGSS: <u>2-LS4-1</u>
Theme 1, C.1	Science	Natural Resources	Living things need water, air, and other resources. They live in places that have the things they need.	NGSS: <u>K-ESS3-1</u>
Theme 2, B.3	Social Studies	Economics: Exchange and Markets	Skills and knowledge are required to produce goods and services.	See local standards
Theme 3, B.1	Social Studies	Civics: Civic and Political Institutions	All people play important roles in a community.	See local standards
Theme 4, B.2	Science	Human Impacts on Earth Systems	The things that people do can affect the world around them.	NGSS: <u>K-ESS3-3</u>

SAMPLE FOREST LITERACY ACTIVITIES

GRADES K-2

1. Read *Welcome to the Neighborwood* by Shawn Sheehy or another book that introduces children to forests and forest organisms. Use a felt board to create a model of a forest. Start by building a tree from various tree parts (trunk, branches, leaves) and then add pictures of other forest plants and different forest animals. [Theme 1, A. Definition of Forests]
2. Gather students by a tree and invite them to act out the different stages of a tree's life. For example, have them curl into a ball like a seed, kneel like a sapling, and stand with arms outspread like a mature tree. Encourage them to compare the tree's life stages to their own. See the activity "**Bursting Buds**" in PLT Canada's [Free Digital and Printable Worksheets](#). [Theme 1, B. Trees as Part of the Forest]
3. Challenge students to look closely at a tree in the schoolyard or other site and find as many different plants and animals as they can (including people) that live in and around it. Help students identify ways that these organisms benefit from the tree and that the tree benefits from them. [Theme 2, A. Environmental Importance]
4. Count the number of objects in the classroom that are made from trees and tree products. For dramatic play, provide costumes such as hard hats, boots, vests, cardboard "saws" and tree-planting tools for students to act out or mimic forest jobs. See the activity "**The Value of a Tree**" from PLT Canada's [Free Digital and Printable Worksheets](#) for more suggestions. [Theme 2, C. Economic Importance]
5. Help students plan and conduct an investigation of what plants need to thrive. For example, they might grow plants under different conditions, such as in the presence or absence of light, water, or soil. Encourage students to measure the height of the plants under each condition and compare the results. Help them make the connection from their investigation to trees and other forest plants. [Theme 3, B. Forest Management]
6. Work with students to carry out a tree planting project. Identify a suitable tree and location, and help students consider how the tree will get the light and water it will need to grow. For details, see the activity [Plant a Tree](#) in PLT's Learn about Forests toolkit. [Theme 3, B. Forest Management]
7. Read *A Walk in the Forest* by Maria Dek, which encourages children to discover the forest as a place for imaginative play and contemplation. After reading the story, take students to a forested area and invite them to close their eyes and open their ears. Create a class book depicting the various sounds students hear. [Theme 4, A. Our Connection to Our Forests]
8. Provide opportunities for students to observe a single tree at different times of the year. With each visit, direct students to sketch the tree and record other observations. At the end of the year, have each child draw pictures of the "adopted" tree in each season and a picture of themselves caring for the tree. Laminate the pictures to make a set of tree placemats for each child. For more details, see the activity "**Adopt a Tree**" from PLT Canada's [Free Digital and Printable Worksheets](#). [Theme 4, B. Working for the Future of Our Forests]

REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS

Help students explore forests through read-aloud books, such as:

1. **Seed School: Growing up Amazing!**
By Joan Holub
2. **Welcome to the Neighborhood.**
By Shawn Sheehy
3. **Trout are Made of Trees!**
By April Pulley Sayre
4. **In the Woods.**
By David Elliott

