



ADOPT A TREE GRADES 1-5

Dive into the world of dendrology! Observe a tree in your community and document how it changes over time.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- This activity encourages you to look at a tree and its surroundings in detail, and return repeatedly to see the changes that occur.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES:

- Create simple maps and pictures
- Identify various changes that have taken place within the trail/school through mapping or modelling.
- Use basic mapping skills to identify, locate, and name familiar locations within the trail/school.

MATERIALS

- Nature journal or notebook
- Pencils (enough to share)
- Coloured pencils (enough to share)

This is an individual outdoor activity, it can be done in outdoor spaces of the school, home, backyard, or nearby parks/trails

WHAT TO DO:

- Take a walk on the Riverside's Knowledge Path and choose a tree to 'adopt.' Draw a map that allows others to locate your tree. Include various landmarks on your map to make your map easier to navigate. You could even include measures in the form of distance between certain landmarks (e.g. My tree is 20 steps North of the playground).

- What does your tree look like? Observe details such as height, colour, and other elements such as shape or line on the branch, leaves. How does it look? Is it healthy, or does it appear dead or damaged? Are all the branches whole, or are some missing sections? Does the tree have leaves, needles, or neither? Anything else?
- Try to identify the type of tree. If you need a little extra help with your identification, upload a photo of your tree to the website, inaturalist.org
- Sketch the tree from different perspectives (ie. like from the eye of birds, insects, worms, flowers, sky etc.)
- Find out if there are any animals or other species on or near the tree? Are there any signs of animal/insect or other species on the tree or in the general area? If yes, what?
- With an “eagle’s eye”, describe how does the natural area surrounding the tree looks like? Are there other trees nearby? Is it a wet or dry environment? Is the tree in a forest or in a more urban environment?
- Do some bark and/or leaf rubbings and keep it as a record in your nature journal.
- Do you have any questions for or about the tree? Do you want to find out something else about the tree?
- Write your knowledge, feelings and emotions about your tree on your nature journal or on paper. Maybe close your eyes and touch the tree, then ask yourself how that makes you feel.

ASSESSMENT:

- Evaluate learners on their attention to detail by explaining the tree and its nearby environment.
- Evaluate how the learners map their tree for others to find and demonstrate their concept of directions.

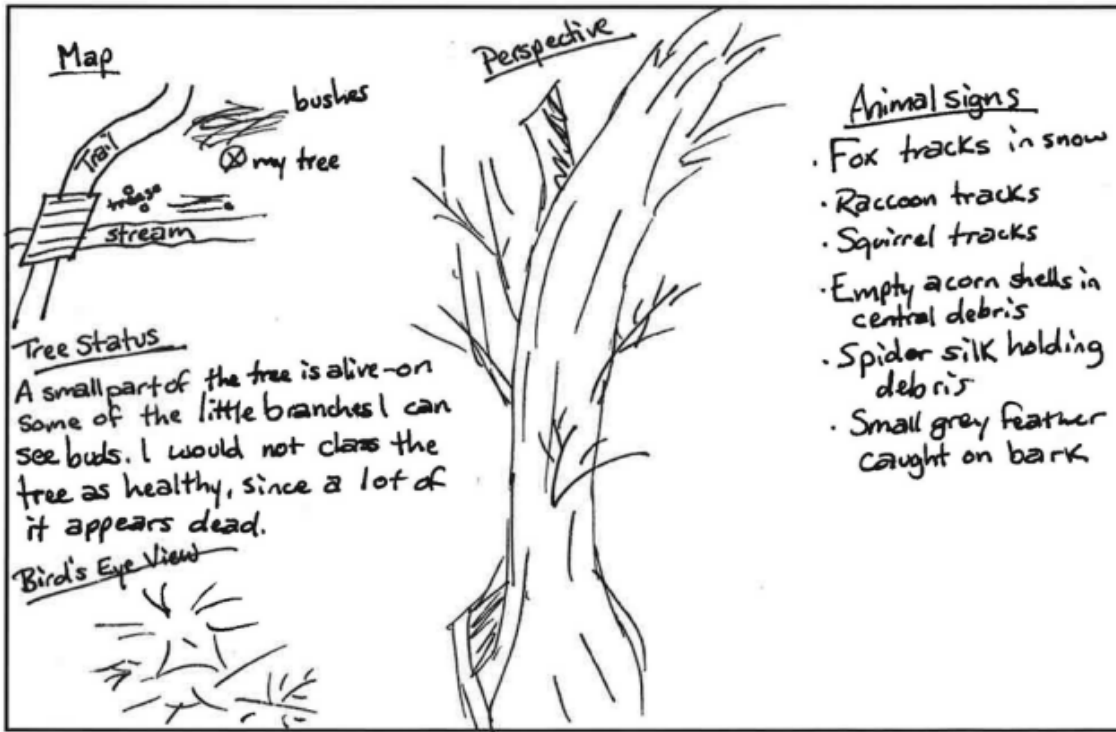
EXTENSIONS:

- Return to the tree regularly and note any changes or things that remained the same. Observe the area again for new animal signs or differences in the surroundings. Record your observations in the nature journal and analyze the changes with changes in weather or other factors. What do you think might be causing these changes?

CREDIT/REFERENCES:

This activity has been modified from the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association [nature journaling activity](#) developed by Elizabeth Thompson

MAPPING TREE EXAMPLE



(Image extracted from <https://thewatershed.org/pdf/Education/NatureJournalingWebversion.pdf>)