

Interview a Tree Activity

Lesson Summary:

Students will make and record observations of a tree. This activity will provide an opportunity for students to practice using their senses and record scientific observations.

Background for Teachers:

Careful observation allows us to appreciate, respect, and learn more about the world in which we live. Developing our senses can promote inquiry and understanding concerning our surroundings. Keep in mind that looking can be different from understanding what we are seeing depending on who we are, where we are, what we are concerned about, and why we are looking. The first steps of the scientific method include careful observation and the formulation of questions based on what is observed.

Materials:

Each student will need.

- Interview a Tree Worksheet
- Something to write on (clipboard, book)
- Pen or pencil

Preparing the Students:

Tell students that they will be interviewing a tree today in class. Read the group this quote from George Washington Carver: *“If you love it enough, anything will talk with you.”* Each student will be finding their own tree or plant to spend 10-20 minutes observing and interviewing. Remind students that this is an individual and silent activity.

Procedure:

1. Take students to an outdoor location where there are enough trees for each student to select their own. If your school doesn't have a lot of trees on campus, allow students to select another type of plant on campus.
2. Distribute Interview a Tree Worksheet.
3. Allow each student to select a tree and begin recording their observations. Tell everyone to find a tree and sit down next to it, and then remind the group that this is an individual, silent activity.
4. After 10-20 minutes have passed, call the students back together. Allow students to share about their experience and parts of their interview.

Discussion Questions:

What did you learn about your tree that you didn't know before?

In what ways are observation skills important to scientists?

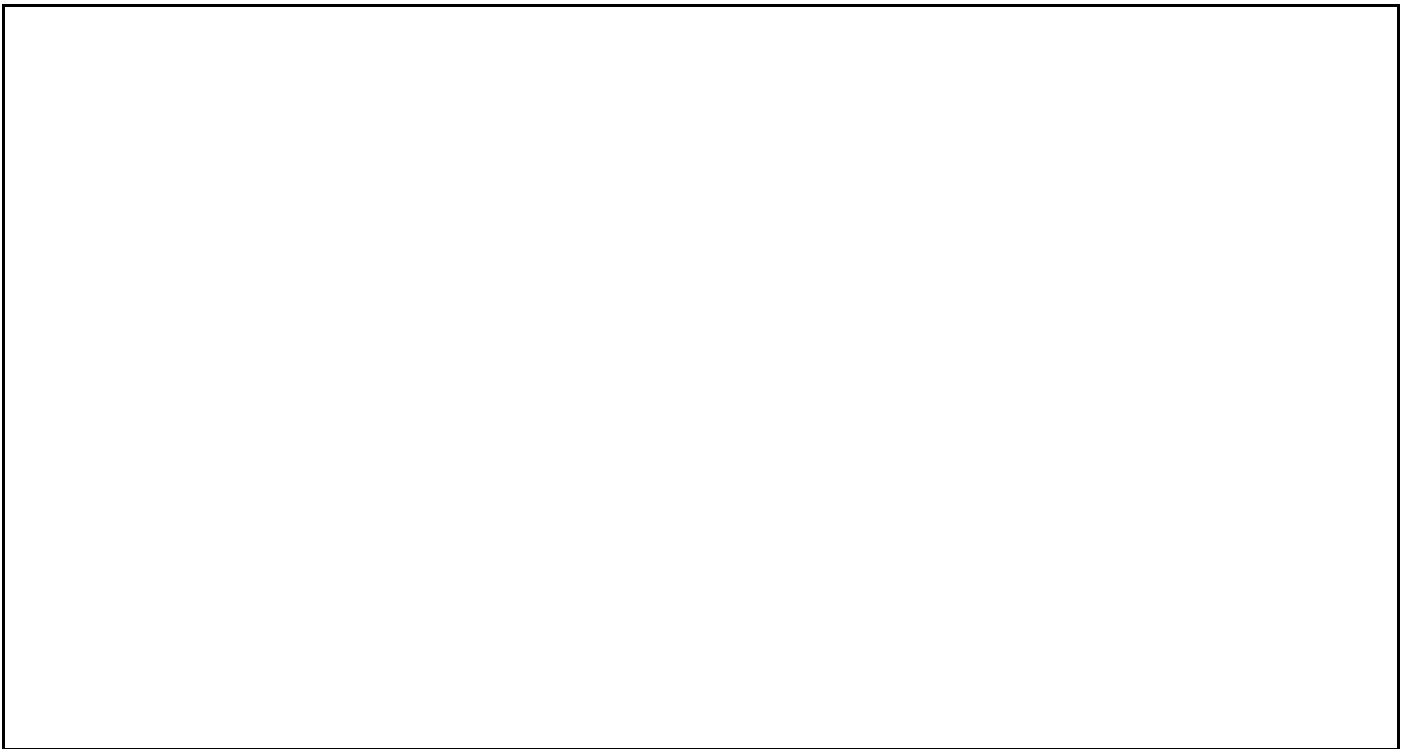
Do you have any questions of your own that you would like to learn about your tree? What are they?

Extension:

Have students write a short story introducing their tree to the other students. Take a tour of the campus and allow the students to read their stories and introduce their trees to each other.

Interview a Tree Worksheet

1. Is your tree alive? How can you tell?
2. Is your tree healthy? How can you tell?
3. In what ways are people helping or hurting it?
4. Draw a picture of your tree from far away. Draw yourself in the picture so that you get an idea of its size.



5. Get a leaf from your tree off of the ground. How does it smell? How does it feel? What color is it? Bring your leaf back to class with you and tape it in the space below.

6. Are any animals on or near your tree? Don't forget to look for insects, spiders, and other small animals. List them here.

7. Are there any signs that animals have used your tree in the past? Look for holes, nests, trails, scat, and other animal signs. Why do you think those animals come to your tree? Do they harm or help it?

ANIMAL SIGN AND WHAT YOU THINK MADE IT	WHY DOES THAT ANIMAL COME TO YOUR TREE?	DO YOU THINK THE ANIMAL HARMS OR HELPS THE TREE?
1.		
2.		
3.		

8. Make a rubbing of your tree's bark in the space below. How does the bark feel? How does it smell? What color is it?

9. Do you know what kind of tree yours is? Does your tree have any fruits, nuts, or seeds that help identify it? What is the overall shape of your tree? (Triangular, oval, circular, etc.)

10. What did you discover about your tree that you didn't know before?