My Tree

English; writing 1b
Aim: To encourage children to look at trees closely.

Remember - you can link tree activities with the use of 'Tree File' which includes a wealth of information about common trees.

Where is your tree?

Find the nearest stand of trees - these will ideally be within your school grounds or near-by and ideally choose an old tree.

What does your tree look like?

On a separate sheet sketch the shape. Note how large the crown is - this is roughly the same size as the roots. If you are visiting the trees in winter then use charcoal pencils to draw the trees. Charcoal comes from trees and simple shapes of trees sketched in charcoal produce wonderful works of art.

What does the bark look like?
What colour is it? Can you see any patterns?

What does your tree feel like?
Ask the children to close their eyes and investigate the tree trunk with their hands/cheeks. Encourage use of descriptive words, see table.

What does the ground underneath your tree feel like?
Can you see the roots of the tree? If there are roots discuss their usage. Roots anchor and stabilise the tree, prevent erosion and take water and nutrients from the soil.

Crouch down and smell the ground.
Describe what you can smell. Stand up again and smell your tree. What does your tree smell like?

Encourage describing words again (see table), these could be used for writing tree poetry back in the classroom.

Stand still and listen to the tree.

What can you hear? What is making the sounds i.e. birds, leaves. Describe the sounds (see table). Draw the shapes of the sounds you can hear (not the thing making them).

Does the sound have a rhythm?

Is it tuneful or is it a noise?

Do the notes go up or down?

Alternately illustrate cartoon sounds small BIG. Back in the classroom use percussion instruments to recreate the sounds you have drawn to make tree music.

Table of sensory describing words

Touch words

sticky, spongy, slimy, rough, smooth, powdery, hairy, prickly, bumpy, squelchy ridged, damp

Sound words

flutter, whistling, swish, rustle, creaking, hollow, squelchy, crisp, crackle, banging, roaring, singing

Smell words

earthy, damp, dry, fresh, fruity, green sharp, rotten, mouldy, sweet, floral, stale musty, pungent

Doorstep Detectives

My Tree

1 **Where is your tree?**

2 **Describe what your tree looks like.**

On a separate sheet sketch the shape.

3 **What does the bark look like?**
What colour is it? Can you see any patterns?

4 **What does your tree feel like?**

5 **What does the ground underneath your tree feel like?**
Can you see the roots of the tree?

6 **Crouch down and smell the ground.**
Describe what you can smell.

7 **Stand up again and smell your tree.** What does your tree smell like?

8 **Stand still and listen to the tree. What can you hear?**

Draw the shapes of the sounds you can hear (not the thing making the sound)

Leaves

Art: 1a, 5a
Aims: To record observations of nature via art and descriptive words.

Circle which season it is now.

The tree will look different in each season. If possible visit the trees in each season and use the worksheets to make comparisons about how the trees look, smell, feel and sound in the different seasons.

Choose a leaf from your tree.

Describe the shape of your leaf. There are two basic types of leaves. One is a simple leaf, for example holly and the other is a compound leaf. These leaves are made up of several leaflets on one leaf, for example ash or elder.

What does your leaf feel and smell like?

Touch words

sticky, spongy, slimy, rough, smooth, powdery, hairy, prickly, bumpy, squelchy ridged, damp

Smell words

earthy, damp, dry, fresh, fruity, green, sharp, rotten, mouldy, sweet, floral, stale musty, pungent

Draw a diagram of one of the leaves from your tree.

Encourage the children to look closely at their chosen leaf. After drawing the diagram put all the leaves in a bag and back at the classroom see if the children can find their leaves. When the children have found their leaves they can colour in the diagram. Collected leaves could be used to create leaf rubbings - use white paper on top of the leaf and rub with a wax crayon. This technique can also be used for bark rubbings. Leaf prints can be created by using poster paint mixed with a little washing up liquid, painting carefully on one side of the leaf. Place carefully wet side down on paper, place a piece of newspaper on top of the leaf and press down, remove the newspaper and the leaf and leave the print to dry.

Did you know that lots of trees have flowers in spring?

They also produce fruit in autumn e.g. conkers. Can you see any signs of flowers or fruit on or around your tree? Describe what you can see. Seeds may be disguised as fruit or nuts to make themselves more appealing to animals and to aid dispersal. Other examples of seeds are apples, cherries, beech mast, acorns, sycamore keys, elder berries, hazelnuts, holly berries etc.

Compare your leaf to other people's in your class. Are they all the same?

If you have been lucky enough to visit a group of trees of different species, then you will have quite a variety of leaf shapes. Back in the classroom the children could use 'Tree File' the trees database to identify their leaves. They could also use their drawings to build up identification charts. See if they can guess the species from their original shape descriptions and read out in class?

Doorstep Detectives

Leaves

1 ***Circle*** **which season it is now.**

Spring Summer Autumn Winter

2 **Choose a leaf from your tree.**
Describe the shape of your leaf.

3 **What does your leaf feel and smell like?**

4 **Draw a diagram of one of the leaves from your tree.**

Label the veins and stem. Look very closely and include any holes, marks or bumps on your diagram.

5 **Did you know that lots of trees have flowers in spring?**
They also produce seeds in autumn e.g. conkers.

Can you see any signs of flowers or seeds on or around your tree?
Describe what you can see.

6 **Compare your leaf with other people's in your class.**
Are they all the same?

Yes ◯ **No** ◯

Tree Measurements

Maths: Number 1b. Shapes, space and measures 4b, Handling data 1d
History 5a,b, c
Aims: To estimate accurately. To understand the size and age of trees. To record estimates and results.

Many species of trees can be found in Britain. Some trees can live for thousands of years. However, just because a tree is tall does not mean it will always be older than a shorter tree.

Measuring the height of a tree

This is a way of estimating the height of a tree.

Measuring the age of a tree

The method we have given is an estimate of the age of the tree. Different trees grow at different rates. A more accurate way of measuring trees is to count the rings but this is not a good method as the tree has to be cut down and we need trees for wildlife and for people. If you can find a felled tree each ring represents one year of a trees life. This could be compared to the method given on the worksheet.

By how many years is the tree younger or older than the pupil? Which are the oldest and youngest trees? Rank them according to a) size and b) age. Is there always a correlation?

Time line

What interesting events took place in the year the tree was 'born'. Produce a time line showing events that have occurred throughout the life of a tree. These events could be local events (the history of your school), national events, 'family trees' including special family dates.

Tree Measurements

Trees can be very tall and it can be difficult to measure them. You'll need to work with a friend to measure your tree.

First guess the height of your tree.

My tree is ( ) cm tall

Using a metre stick find the height of your friend.

My friend is ( ) cm tall

Get your friend to stand next to your tree. Stand back from your tree.

Work out how many times your friend goes into the height of the tree as shown in the diagram.

( ) **The height of person**

x

( ) **number of times the person goes into your tree**

=

( ) **the height of your tree.**

Measure around the trunk of your tree, about 1 metre from the ground. This is called the girth of the tree. Write this measurement below in centimetres.

2.5 cm of girth = one year's growth. 5 cm of girth = two year's growth
Using the sum below you can work out the age of your tree?

Girth of tree ( ) cm divided by 2.5 = ( ) years.

Use a calculator to check that your calculation is accurate.