

## GETTING TO KNOW THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

### Activity Information

**Grade appropriate level:** 3 – 7

**Duration:** 1 – 2 hours

**Materials:**

- Three envelopes: in each envelope is a small branch sample of one of the three BC trees. There is also a photograph of the corresponding tree from a distance and a photograph of the bark. Each table will have three envelopes (one for each of the three tree types). The envelopes should be labeled A, B and C. Each group should have the same samples, (i.e. all the A envelopes: Western Red Cedar). Of course you can choose whatever trees are near your school.
- Paper

### Objective

To be able to identify at least three types of BC trees. choosing from Western Red Cedar, Lodgepole Pine, Western Red Hemlock or Douglas Fir.

- Identify patterns and groupings to draw conclusions from information
- Conduct simple tests and describe observations
- Communicate scientific information.



Through investigations and experimentation students determine the needs, structure, and adaptations of plants.

Students can demonstrate their knowledge of plants and the environment by writing, drawing and keeping scientific logs.

### Prescribed Learning Outcomes

#### Life Science (B.C.'s Living Resources)

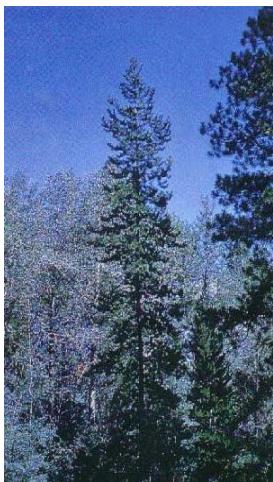
*It is expected that students will:*

- identify living resources in the local environment
- describe how humans use B.C.'s living resources
- describe the known and potential environmental impacts of using B.C.'s living resources
- classify plants and animals according to their internal and external features

### Suggested Instructional Strategies

- For this lesson the class is put into small working groups.
- Hand out an A, B and C envelope to each group. Hand out three sheets of blank paper to each group.
- Take a sample envelope and show the class its contents. Point out the letter on the envelope. Hold up the branch sample. Ask for someone to

describe the sample. Draw A on the board and write the description offered by the student underneath. Open up the second envelope, point out the letter on it and ask for a description of the branch. Write the description word under the appropriate letter on the board. Repeat with the third



envelope. Discuss the observations. For instance my class said, "green" for all three. We talked about how they were all green and therefore all correct descriptions -but did one sample have something about it that was different from all the rest.

- When you feel the class is prepared to make observations on their own, have them open up their individual envelopes. Have them look at the branches first, and then the pictures. Ensure they write their observation on each of the three sheets. They should then put the letter from the envelope on the sheet with the descriptions. Encourage illustrations where words will not adequately describe their specific observation.
- You might want to circulate and share specific observations of certain groups to get the ball rolling.
- After you have allowed for an adequate time to generate group lists stop the class and generate a whole class list on the board. After you have a class list of observations focus in on the observations that are unique and identifying characteristics of each tree. For instance cedar leaves are flat and scaly, and pine are not. Cedars generally have a "feathery" resemblance.

- Have the class point out which descriptions are the most important. Ask them if they were standing in front of one of these three trees, which descriptions would be the most helpful in identifying it as A, B or C.
- Once you have a shortened list under each A, B and C ask the class if there is anything else they would need to add from what they observed to identify a tree as either A, B, or C - something unique to either A, B or C.

Once the class has decided on a list, hand each group an unidentified envelope with pictures and a tree sample. It is each group's task to decide whether their envelope has the tree A, B, or C. You may or may not want to let the class know the real names of each tree before they do this part of the activity.

- Have each group present to the class what kind of tree they have in their envelope and how they came to their conclusions.



### Suggested Assessment Strategies

Observation: what kind of descriptions are the students providing? How are they able to communicate their observations to others in their group and to the class? How do the students go about identifying their unknown sample?

### Extension activities

Follow up this activity with a walk into the woods. We stopped at trees and tried to identify, as a class, specific trees. After 10 - 15 minutes of walking we played a game, I would call out a tree name (i.e. Lodgepole pine) and the students would have to walk to



a Lodgepole pine and stand near it - or put their arms around it if it was big enough. Encourage the students to discuss what kinds of animals, birds and insects might make use of this tree. Is it a "wildlife tree"? Can they see any evidence of their use? How might people and First Nations use this tree (i.e. totem, recreation, products, etc.) Lots of related activities can be found in Wildlife Trees of British Columbia by Kerrie Post and Andrew & Carolyn MacDonald.

The Project Wild Activity Guide compiled by the Canadian Wildlife Federation also has many related activities.

#### **Cross-Curricular Interests**

English Language Arts, Fine Arts, Science, Social Studies,  
Aboriginal studies



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