

Meet a Tree



Objective:

Students will learn about trees by using senses other than sight.

Grade Level: 1–6

Groupings: Pairs

Materials: Paper bags or winter hats (to be used as blindfolds).

Time Allotment: 30–45 minutes

Directions:

1. Discuss trees and their importance in our everyday lives. Make a list of all the things trees give us. Go outside and explain to the students that they will be meeting a new friend—a tree.
2. Use a volunteer to show the students how they will be performing the activity. The class will divide into pairs. One student will be blindfolded, and the partner will carefully lead him or her to a tree. Explain that each blindfolded student will depend on his or her partner to keep them safe and out of danger. Stress the importance of being careful and responsible while guiding someone who is wearing a blindfold and when wearing a blindfold.
3. Place a paper bag over your volunteer's head or pull a winter hat over his or her eyes. Demonstrate how you would like the students to guide their partners in this activity by having the blindfolded volunteer grasp your arm securely above the elbow. Walk just in front of the volunteer so you can safely lead them along. If he or she feels uncomfortable or would like to slow down, have him or her simply let go of your arm.
4. Slowly and carefully lead the volunteer to a nearby tree, giving guidance along the way such as “duck down,” “step over,” or “we’re going uphill.”



Extensions:

a. Give your students paper to record observations about their tree. You might have them draw their tree, give it a name, describe how it might look in different seasons, make a bark rubbing or collect a leaf. You may also want to have the students keep track of their trees throughout the school year, make a class map of the trees, record how it changes from season to season, or who lives in, under or around it.

b. Play tree charades. Whisper to two students an important use for a tree and have them act it out for the group. Let the rest of the class guess what they are imitating. Once they have guessed correctly, ask for volunteers to do another charade. Have the class brainstorm their own tree-use charades. Make a list of the different charades and the ways people and animals use trees. Try sorting them into categories.

Directions: (continued)

5. At the tree, have the volunteer feel the tree up and down, and the area all around it. Have him or her note the texture of the bark, any distinct smells, if and where any branches are, landmarks around the base, or any nearby trees or bushes. When the volunteer is familiar with the tree, lead him or her back to the starting place, preferably by an alternate route.

6. Remove the blindfold and have the volunteer try to find the tree. If the volunteer is having trouble, give clues as needed. When the volunteer reaches the tree, ask what clues helped him or her find it.

7. Have the students divide into pairs. Pass out paper bags or have them use their hats, pulled down over their eyes. Caution them once again about blindfolds and safety. Let the whole group begin.

8. Once a student has found his or her tree, have the partner wear the blindfold and repeat the activity.