



The Book Planter



Ag in the Classroom

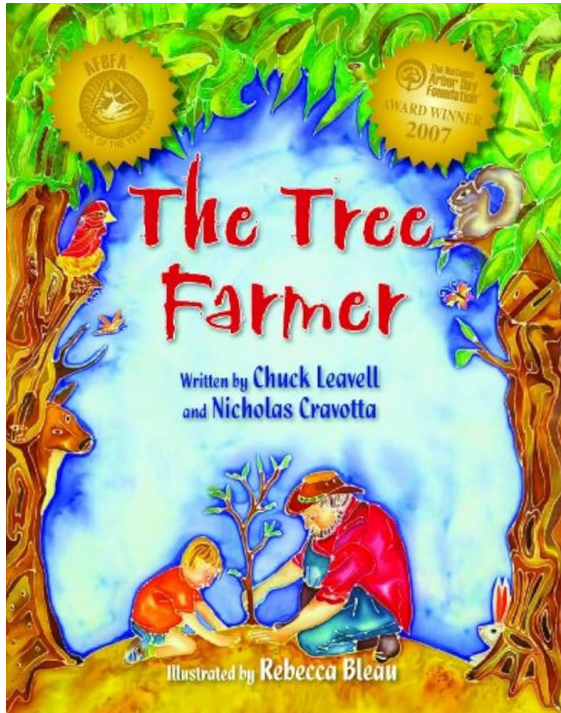
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The Tree Farmer

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A grandson confronts his grandfather, a tree farmer, about how he can grow trees with so much love and care, only to cut them down. But as they walk together through the trees, they discover the majesty of the forest and enjoy the life journey of each tree. This book takes young readers on a magical journey through the forest, in a tale of the gifts of trees and our responsibility to care for trees, generation to generation.

Before Reading:

- Show students the cover of the book and ask, “What do you think this book is about?”
- Ask, “What do you know about trees?”
- Ask, “What are products we get from trees?”

During Reading:

- Have students take notes on products or items we get from trees.

After Reading:

- Ask, “What do you think was the main message of this book? Is there more than one theme or message?”
- Ask, “What did you like most about the book?”
- Ask, “Why do you think trees are important?”

Activity 1: Reading Between the Circles¹

Materials – either one per student or one per group.

- Tree cookie (you may look for “unfinished natural wood slices” online or try to get one from a local tree service/arborist. Your local Forest Service office might have a resource they can share, or you can look at a tree stump if there is one near by.

- Magnifying glass
- Ruler

Procedure

1. Examine your tree cookie. Notice the concentric rings (like a bullseye pattern).
2. Use a magnifying glass to look more closely at the sets of rings. Can you see that each ring has a light part and a dark part? The light part and dark part together count as one ring.
3. Tell students, “Trees add a new layer of growth between the bark and the truck each growing season. The lighter colored rings are formed in spring and early summer. The darker ring growth occurs in late summer and autumn.
4. Have students create a simple chart in their journals (see below).
5. Find the innermost ring. This is the first year’s growth of the tree.
6. Find the outermost ring. This is the last year’s growth of the tree.
7. Choose to count either the dark rings or the light rings. The number you get gives you the rough age of a tree.

Detail about the Tree Cookie	My Observations
Number of Rings (tree age)	
Widest Ring	
Narrowest Ring	

8. Find the widest ring. Use a ruler to measure the width of this ring. Note it on the table. Tell students, “The ring width reveals how much the tree grew in that year. Good growing climate (plenty of rain, sun, etc.) makes the tree ring grow wider. Narrow rings signal stress factors such as forest fires, lack of water, or extreme cold or heat. A young tree grows fast. Mature trees grow more slowly. And so, the rings become narrower as the tree gets older.”



9. Are the rings on your tree cookie mostly wide or mostly narrow?
10. Do the rings tend to be wider near the center or near the edge of the tree cookie?
11. How old was the tree in your sample? Did your tree grow in mostly wet, good years (wide rings)? Or was it mostly dry, hard years (narrow rings)? Or a mix of good and hard years?
12. Once the students are finished handling their tree cookies, allow them time to wash their hands.

Activity 2: Living and Non-Living Components of a Forest²

Prior to teaching this activity, label a poster with the title, "Is it Living?" Create a table with 4 columns and 11 rows. Label column 1, "What do you see in the forest?" Column 2, "Does it grow and change?" Column 3, "Does it need food and water?" Column 4, "Can it reproduce?" Leave the other sections blank until the class completes the table. See example below.

Is it Living?

What do you see in the forest?	Does it grow and change?	Does it need food and water?	Can it reproduce?
Rock	No	No	No
Tree	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bear	Yes	Yes	Yes
Water	No	No	No
Wildflower	Yes	Yes	Yes
Deer	Yes	Yes	Yes
Soil	No	No	No
Mushroom	Yes	Yes	Yes
Air	No	No	No
Rabbit	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. Explain that a forest is made up of living and non-living things. Recall to students that *The Tree Farmer* book mentions the life of the forest.
2. Clarify that living things can grow and change, need food and water, and can reproduce (make more of themselves). Non-living things do not grow, do not need food or water, and cannot make more of themselves. Hang up the *Is it Living?* chart.
3. Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine they are walking through the forest. Invite them to share some of the things they see in the forest. Write the forest things they share on the chart. Answer each of the questions by writing “Yes” or “No” in the appropriate spaces. If they answer yes to each question, it is a living thing. If they answer no to each question, it is a non-living thing.
4. Pass out the [Living and Non-Living Things](#) activity sheet. Point to each picture and discuss each item that can be found in a forest. (plant, water, rabbit, deer, wind, tree, microorganisms, soil, fox, rocks).
5. After the discussion, have the students circle the living things on the activity sheet with a green crayon or marker and the non-living things with red. Review the correct answers together as a class. (Green: plant, rabbit, deer, microorganisms, fox. Red: water, wind, soil, rocks.)

Activity 3: Forestry Products²

1. Ask students to look at their notes from the During Reading prompt: What products or items do we get from trees?
2. Ask students to look around the room and identify products that come from forest trees. (Tables, chairs, pencils, paper, books, paper towels, etc.) Clarify that wood and paper come from trees which grow in forests. Remind students that products we get from trees come from forests that are planted to be harvested for their wood (timber), which is then used for these various products.
3. Pass out the [Forestry Products](#) activity sheet. Point to each picture and identify what it is. (lumber, scissors, cat, maple syrup, airplane, cardboard box, books, pencil, writing paper, cell phone, toilet paper, firewood, bicycle, tissues, table and chairs)
4. Instruct the students to circle the products that come from forest trees. Review the correct answers together as a class (lumber, maple syrup, cardboard box, books, pencil, writing paper, toilet paper, firewood, tissues, table and chairs).

Sources

1. American Chemical Society. (2026). Reading Between the Circles, *Celebrating Chemistry: Chemists Celebrate Earth Week*. 9.
2. <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/lessons/987/>

K-5 Subject Areas: English Language Arts, and Science

English Language Arts

- RI.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- RI.K.2 With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- RI.K.4 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about words in a text
- .RI.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- RI.1.2 Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- RI.1.4 Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.
- RI.1.5 Know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text.
- RI.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

- RI.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- RI.2.7 Explain how specific images contribute to and clarify a text.
- RI.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- RI.3.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
- RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RI.4.2 Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- RI.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RI.5.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

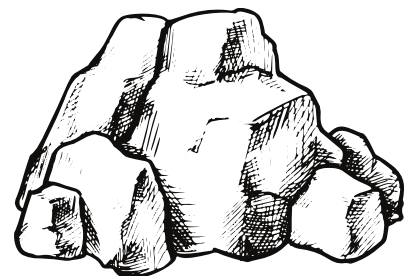
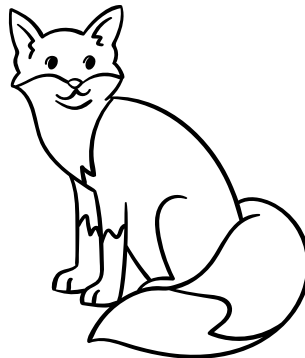
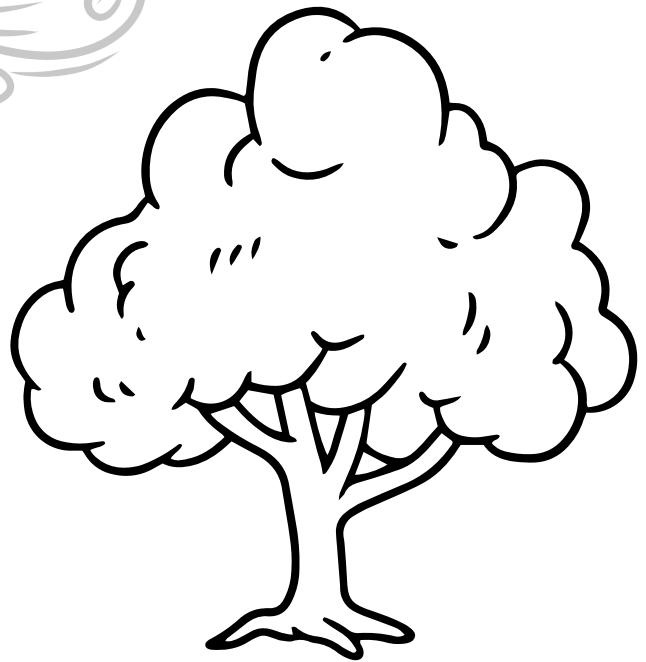
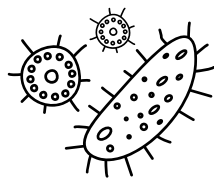
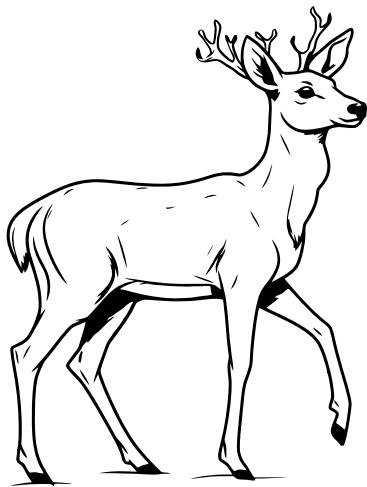
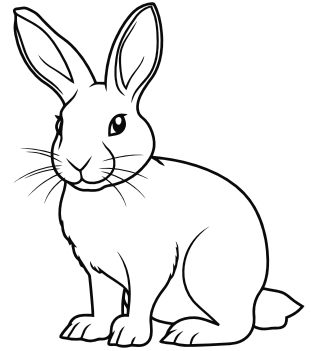
Science

- PS.K.1 Understand how objects are described based on their physical properties and how they are used.
- LS.K.1 Understand the characteristics of living organisms and nonliving things.
- LS.K.2 Understand characteristics of organisms that make them alike and different.
- LS.1.1 Understand the basic needs of a variety of plants and animals in different ecosystems.
- LS.4.1 Understand the effects of environmental changes, adaptations, and behaviors that enable organisms to survive in changing habitats.
- LS.5.2 Understand the interdependence of plants and animals within their ecosystems.

Name _____

Living and Non-Living Things

Circle the living things green and circle the non-living things red.



Name _____

Forestry Products

Circle the products that come from forest trees.

