

# 2nd Grade Activity: Get to Know a Local Tree

*Trees are places to play and are home for many species of wildlife. They are also an important natural resource for humans. Trees come in different shapes, sizes and textures. Using all five of your senses, let's investigate.*

*(NGSS Disciplinary Core Ideas 2.LS2.2 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics;  
2.LS4.1 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity)*

## Pre-Activity Questions

- What are our five senses?
- What are the different parts of a tree?
- What colors do trees have?

## Activity

- Let's make a list of our senses. When we experience the world, we tend to rely heavily on our sense of sight. Do you think all animals use their sight as their primary sense?
  - There are many animals that use their other sense to understand what's around them. **ELEPHANTS**, for example, have very poor eyesight and use their amazing hearing, sense of smell, and even touch to navigate their surroundings.
  - **BATS** are another animal known for navigating without sight, but only some bats use echolocation (sound) to find things. Most bats actually have an incredibly keen sense of sight. The Flying Foxes we have at the Oakland Zoo are a type of fruit bat. What is the easiest way to find fruits? Well it isn't trying to hear them.
- Go to a place with several trees that you visit often. Take a look around. What do you notice with your eyes? Take 5 minutes to look carefully at your surroundings. Is a single tree just one color? Does it have multiple colors?
- Now, we're going to practice using our sense of touch, smell, and hearing to experience a specific part of this place.

## Let's investigate!

### Materials

- A blindfold or eye covering
- A tree or various trees
- Pencil/Pens & paper for observations

## Steps

1. In a safe space for observation, ask someone in your household to choose a tree for investigation, but keep the choice a secret..
2. Place a **blindfold** over your eyes and let them guide you carefully to the chosen tree.
3. Use your senses (other than sight) to investigate the tree.
4. After 5 minutes, allow them to walk you back to the starting location.
5. Remove your blindfold and try to guess which tree you explored.
6. If there are various species of trees, try exploring and comparing each different species. What colors or shapes are different and similar? Note your observations on a **piece of paper**.
7. Search the ground for cones and seeds, look in the trees for flowers. How do trees make new trees? Are there tree babies?

## Post-Activity Questions and Activities

- What did you feel first? Next?
- What sounds did you hear? What animals made those sounds? Do they live in your tree?
- How would you describe the tree's texture? (*Bumpy, rough, hard, etc.*)
- Do different types of trees feel different from others? Why or why not?
- How would this observation differ if done at different times of the year?
- How does a tree grow?
- How does a tree make pine cones, acorns or fruit?
- Who lives in trees?
- How do trees help us?