

Lesson Plan
Ryan Adams

Lesson: Adopt a Tree

Length: 50 minutes—ongoing lesson

Age or Grade Level Intended: 1st grade

Origin: *Project Learning Tree®: Environmental Education Activity Guide*, pages 97-101

Academic Standard(s):

Science:

1.4.2 Observe and describe that there can be difference, such as size or markings, among the individuals within one kind of plant or animal group.

Skills: Observe and describe

Knowledge: difference, size, markings, plant, animal group

Performance Objective(s):

After adopting trees, students will describe in at least one sentence the characteristics of their tree.

Assessment:

My assessment will be where the students create journals for their “Adopt a Tree” project. In the journals, students will document what they see and do when they visit their tree throughout the school year.

Advance Preparation by Teacher:

- Gather notebooks or materials for students to make their own “Adopt a Tree” journals
- Have students fold a sheet of construction paper in half and insert blank pages
- Have the following sentence starters on the board to assist students throughout the lesson when needed:
 - *My tree smells like...*
 - *My tree feels like...*
 - *My tree looks like...*
- Locate an area close to the school with several trees on or near the school grounds
- Check for any hazards in the chosen area to observe trees

Procedure:

Introduction/Motivation: (Engage)

1. Class, who can remind us what we talked about yesterday during our science lesson? (**Bloom:** Knowledge) If you recall, we talked about how soil helps things grow. Today, we are going to start looking at the importance of trees and learn how to compare them to each other.
(**Gardner:** Verbal/Linguistic, Intrapersonal)
2. Before we get to go outside and observe some trees, we are first going to read a poem together called “Have You Seen Trees?” by Joanne Oppenheim. By just looking at the cover, what do you think this poem will be about? (**Bloom:** Knowledge) Read story to students.
(**Gardner:** Visual-Spatial, Verbal/Linguistic, Interpersonal)
3. After reading the poem together as a class, pass around various pictures of trees that you have taken over several years? Ask students if they think they would be able to go outside and find trees similar to the ones in the pictures they are seeing and similar to the ones described in the book. (**Bloom:** Application)
(**Gardner:** Visual-Spatial, Verbal/Linguistic, Interpersonal)

Step-by-Step Plan: (Explore)

1. Take students outside to the designated Adopt a Tree area. Tell the students to use their senses of smell, touch, hear, and sight to become familiar with the wooded area and its surroundings within 5 minutes.
(**Gardner:** Visual-Spatial, Verbal/Linguistic, Interpersonal, Bodily-Kinesthetic)
2. The teacher should choose a tree and ask the students to describe the tree using their sense of sight and then the rest of the senses. While working together as a class, have students record different descriptive words in their journals about what they see.
(**Gardner:** Visual-Spatial, Verbal/Linguistic, Interpersonal)
3. Ask students whether they think the tree is alive or dead. Ask the students how they know whether it is alive or dead. (Answer: Trees need food and water to grow just like people).
(**Bloom:** evaluation) (**Gardner:** Visual-Spatial, Verbal/Linguistic, Interpersonal)

4. Students should be reminded to stay within the designated area when they are released to go and adopt their own trees. Have students walk around the area and choose their own trees they want to work with throughout the school year. Allow students to place flagging tape on their tree to mark them as theirs if appropriate. Tell the students after they have selected their trees to write down characteristics of their trees and create a small map in their journals showing where their tree is located. The teacher should take pictures of each student with their tree for the cover of their journals. Students will be given a small sheet of paper to help guide them in writing their journal entries.
(**Gardner:** Visual-Spatial, Verbal/Linguistic, Interpersonal)

Closure: (Engage)

5. Have students quietly return to the classroom. After the students are seated, the students will lead a discussion about the observations they made. Draw a Venn diagram on the board to show the similarities and differences between each student's adopt a tree.
(**Gardner:** Visual-Spatial, Verbal/Linguistic, Interpersonal)

Adaptation:

Student with ADHD

This student struggles with group interaction, so he will be assisted by a teacher's aide who will encourage him during the lesson to complete the assigned tasks. The teacher will also allow this student to share some of their ideas during the group discussion near the end of the lesson.

Enrichment:

Have students create a picture of a tree with flip-up windows portraying the life of their tree, and in their tree.

Self-Reflection:

Write out the questions that you will use to evaluate yourself.

- Were all students engaged during the lesson?
- Did the students appear to choose a tree quickly or was in a drawn out process that took forever?
- Were there enough trees in the chosen area for all students to pick their own?
- How would I improve this lesson to teach again?
- What went well? What could have gone better?