

TREES CHALLENGE | TEACHER GUIDE



Activity Overview:

In this activity, students will be selecting a tree that they either pass by frequently or that is within the school yard to protect. Each student will then fill out a protection certificate and try to identify their tree! They will then brainstorm ways they can protect their trees. Students will then be protectors of their tree for the rest of the school year.

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Activity Duration: 1-2 hours

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Common Core

- *W.1.8: With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.*

NGSS

- *K-ESS3-3: Communicate solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on the land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment.**

MA Comprehensive Health

- *2.7.CE.3: Identify strategies to minimize impact on the environment (e.g., reduce, reuse, recycle). [HE]*

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Tree protection certificate templates*
- *Writing materials*
- *Coloring materials*





BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Every minute, humans destroy the equivalent of 48 football fields of rainforest. Deforestation should shock everyone into action. Trees are a critical natural resource, they regulate the earth's climate by participating in the carbon and water cycles, provide breathable air via photosynthesis, and make up important products like furniture, paper, and medicine.

National Geographic estimates that all of the world's rainforest could disappear in around 100 years at the current rate of deforestation. The main culprit is agriculture. In a rush to feed the world's growing population, the expansion of agriculture has contributed to 80% of total deforestation. Farmers clear acres of forest at a time to make room for soy, palm, and grazing livestock.

This rate of tree loss has a devastating environmental impact. Not only is forest loss and degradation a major contributor to habitat loss, but removing trees can cause soil erosion or even desertification. Fewer forests on Earth leads to more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, preventing future absorption of greenhouse gases and releasing any carbon dioxide stored in the severed trees.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduce the activity overview to students and explain that they will need to find a tree to protect.
2. Give students time to pick a tree OR go on a brief nature walk outside and find a few trees to protect as a class. It's recommended that an adult takes a picture of the tree the student selects to help fill in the certificate.
3. Hand out tree protection certificates to students to fill out. Students can start by giving their tree a name, drawing the seed/leaf/bark OR gluing the seed/leaf/bark on the certificate.
4. Students will then identify one way they will protect their tree for the rest of the year.
5. Once students have almost completed their certificates, use this resource to try to identify what type of tree each student has selected.
6. Have students bring their certificates home and continue to protect their tree for the remainder of the school year!