

## If a tree falls in the forest...

( [http://www.cce.org/resources/learning\\_centre/classroom\\_activities/forests.asp](http://www.cce.org/resources/learning_centre/classroom_activities/forests.asp) )

### Time:

Two hours

### Materials:

- Internet access

### Overview

Forests cover nearly one-third of the Earth's land and provide us with wood, food, medicines, paper, and many other products that we use every day. Forests also oxygenate the air, modify climate, and contribute to our recreational and personal needs. In this lesson, students will explore the role that forests play in their own lives by listing everyday products made from trees, then researching and categorizing less common products that may be less familiar to students.

### Objectives

Students will:

- Identify by-products from forests used in their everyday lives
- Describe several ways in which people depend on forests

### Geographic Skills

- Asking Geographic Questions
- Acquiring Geographic Information
- Organizing Geographic Information
- Answering Geographic Questions
- Analyzing Geographic Information

### Suggested Procedure

#### *Opening:*

As a class, brainstorm a list of common products derived from trees (for example, writing paper, money, and books). Ask the students if they can think of other benefits trees provide (for example, shade, recreation, and oxygenation of the air). Tell students that there are countless other products that contain components derived from wood that may not be as obvious.

#### *Development:*

Explain to the students that they will be conducting research to find out about some of the less obvious benefits of trees. Create a class list of the products and uses the students find. Challenge students to investigate the manufacturing processes involved in making these products, including what part of the tree is used for each product or derivative. As new products get added, have the students explain what they discovered about them.

Once the class has developed a list, ask students if they can identify categories for these forest products, such as the following:

*Foods from trees:* almonds, chestnuts, walnuts, lemons, cinnamon, maple syrup, figs, cloves, olives, coffee, coconuts

*Products derived from all parts of a tree:* pencils, books, carpets, firewood, ink, chopsticks, houses, luggage, golf balls, cardboard, tissues, magazines, cleaning compounds, tea bags, newspapers, beds, fish food, rayon fabrics, colognes, boardwalks, napkins, guitars, shampoo, football helmets, bottle corks, baseballs, medicine, chewing gum

*Environmental benefits of trees:* absorbing noise pollution, providing oxygen, providing shelter for birds and other animals, holding soil in place

*Recreational uses of trees:* climbing, tree-houses, making canoes or other types of boats

You may end up with another category that might include aesthetic values, providing shade from sun, serving as windbreaks, and cooling hot asphalt or concrete.

*Closing:*

Have students imagine a day in their lives without trees. How would their routines differ? How would their environments change?

### **Suggested Student Assessment**

Have students prepare a short illustrated story about their day or a facet of it without trees. They might opt to describe their school day, a sporting or recreational event, or home life.

### **Extending the Lesson**

Students can identify and research local forest issues in particular, threats to forests, such as fires and insect infestation. What programs are in place to prevent such threats?