

# Connecting Kids to Nature

Nature is a great teacher and getting kids outside to learn and play is good for their brains and their bodies. Try this outdoor activity from Project Learning Tree® - it's safe, fun, and educational!



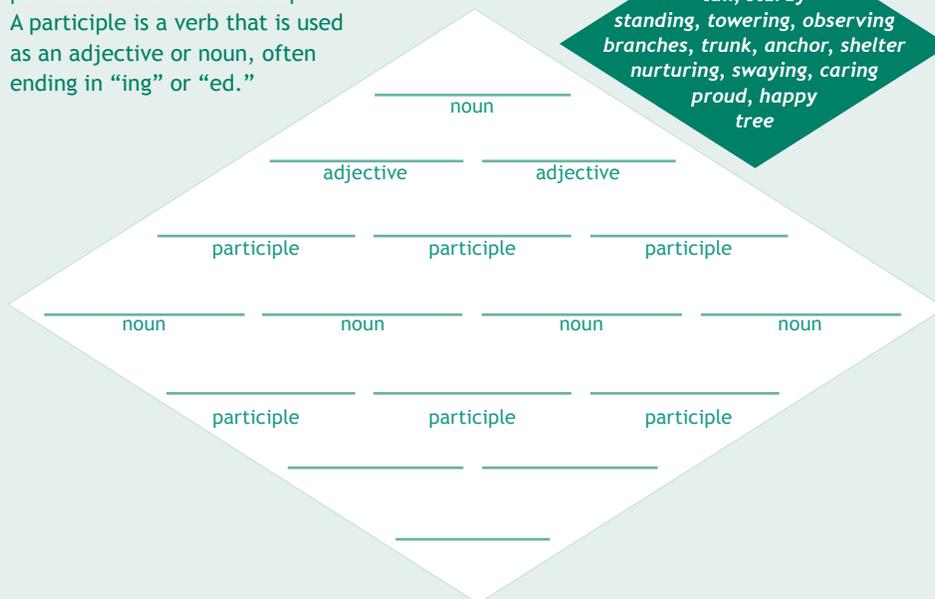
Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

## Poet-Tree

Poetry offers children an opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas about the environment in creative and artistic ways. Take children outdoors to observe a variety of trees and then encourage them to write a poem.

- Invite children to choose a tree near their home, school, or local park for observation.
- Ask children to spend time observing their tree from various perspectives; sitting against it, lying underneath it, walking around it, etc.
- Using nature journals or notebooks, have children record words, ideas, and impressions that enter their minds.
- Remind children to use their senses (touch, smell, sight, and sound... but not taste) to generate more words to describe their tree.
- Finally, challenge children to convert their thoughts into one of the poetic forms provided. Later, you might ask them to explain which form they chose and why.

**Diamante Poems** are diamond shaped, consisting of seven lines that use specific parts of speech in the pattern shown. Grammar Tip: A participle is a verb that is used as an adjective or noun, often ending in "ing" or "ed."



**Haiku Poetry** is a Japanese form that consists of three lines: the first line has five syllables, the second line has seven, and the third line has five again. The third line often contains a surprising or tension element.

Title: Snails  
By Leslie Heisler, Grade 3

*Makes a slimy path  
Sticking on the long thick grass  
Hides from predators*

**Shape Poetry** describes an object and is written so that the lines form a physical pattern, usually similar to the shape of the subject.

Shape poetry can also outline the subject as a line drawing. Fun!

branches shade rubber fruit clothes  
paper wind barrier fuel furniture resource nuts  
tree houses maple syrup parks multiple uses seeds oxygen  
lumber habitat energy building materials  
baseball bats leaves photosynthesis  
roots gum cork books paint cocoa sponge

**Fluxus Poetry** aims to elevate everyday objects and events to the level of fine art. To try it, write down nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are related to the topic on small strips of paper. For this activity, consider trees, nature, or the outdoors. Next fold them, mix them, and randomly pull strips from a pile - while writing down the words in the order they are chosen and adding punctuation at will.

*Green, refreshing, quiet, leaves.  
Calmness... chirping... excitement!*

### Make Learning Fun!

Encourage your child's school to incorporate learning outdoors.

For more activity ideas and materials:

- Attend a PLT workshop, [www.plt.org/state-network/](http://www.plt.org/state-network/)
- Visit [shop.plt.org](http://shop.plt.org)

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