



Activity ideas based around the song *The tree in the wood*

- Be an observer:

-Go on a nature walk in the local environment to observe how different plants grow. Take photographs for future reference, which could be labelled, painted and collaged at a later date. As a macro photography challenge take a series of close up photos of different bark patterns.

-Make bark rubbings. You could use these in a collage later. Note that outer bark protects the tree from extreme temperatures, bad weather, insects and fungi. How many can you see that have thin bark such as birch trees, compared to those with thicker outer bark such as Douglas fir.

- Be a mathematician:

-Record the number of deciduous and evergreen trees you see and create a graph, table or chart with the findings. You could also note their diameter, approximate their height and estimate their age. Oaks and all other long-lived species grow slowly, whereas willows and aspen for example, have shorter life cycles.

-If you see any trunks that have been cut down, estimate the tree's age, based on the number of rings you can see. Each year, the tree forms new cells, arranged in concentric circles called annual growth rings.

- Be an artist:

-Using materials that you have at home, create a piece of artwork based on the photos taken on the nature walk or sourced online. You could use things collected from outdoors such as twigs and leaves, or things you have already such as play dough/plasticine, Lego, scrap material or wool/string, even recycling to depict the shapes, textures and colours found in nature. Try gluing lengths of string in various bark like patterns onto a small piece of cardboard then use this to print a repeated pattern on paper or fabric using paint or ink.

-Look up artist Piet Mondrian renowned for his abstract paintings of trees. Have a go at reproducing your own versions with charcoal, pencils, ink and paint.



- Be a reporter:

-Research some of the world's most striking trees such as those below and write a report about them. Have a go at recording your news bulletin.

- The avenue of the Baobabs, Madagascar
- Socotra dragon trees in Yemen
- Rainbow Eucalyptus trees in Hawaii
- The Dark Hedges, a collection of Beech trees in Northern Ireland
- Giant redwoods in the Sequoia National Park, USA

-Write a diary entry from the perspective of a seed who gets picked up by the wind and goes on an adventure.

- Be a scientist:

Set up a home experiment using seeds and/or bulbs (you could use pips from an apple you've eaten for example). Observe and record the growth as they change over time. What do you need to make a fair comparison? Try different settings and environments to see what creates the best growing conditions.

- Be a songwriter:

Research the requirements of plants for germination, growth and survival and make up your own rap about it. Explore free music apps and create some beats or a bass line then add your rap over the top – record it if you can.

- Be a geographer:

Look up different species of birds from around the world and find their countries of origin on a globe or map. Find out about migration patterns and track the journey of a bird on a map. Do a lifelike drawing or painting of the most colourful or unusual bird you find.

- Be a poet:

Many poets have penned verses about birds and trees, including William Shakespeare, Percy Shelley and John Keats. One of Emily Dickinson's most well-known poems is *Hope Is The Thing With Feathers* and uses the metaphor of hope as a bird. Try writing your own poem using nature as your inspiration.