



## Poet-Tree

Learners will be introduced to the reasons trees are important for the health of the planet. They will read a poem by a young person from the perspective of a tree. They will then write their own poem using personification from the perspective of a tree, using the different senses to describe. They will understand that the purpose of their writing is to help others understand why it is important to protect trees.

### Teaching time

1 hour

### Learning outcomes

- Understand why plants are important, and the role of trees in supporting biodiversity
- Understand and identify rhyme
- Write a poem using personification

### Step by step

1. Introduce the class to the information about why plants matter.
2. Learners draw a picture of a tree they see often or which is important to them.
3. Read aloud and then choral read the poem 'I am the Tree'.
4. Discuss the poem as a class through talk partner questions (see page 3).
5. Model writing using personification.
6. Each learner to write a poem including personification (see pages 3-4).
7. Publish poems onto the leaf template and stick the leaves around a trunk.
8. Plenary – how else can we help people realise how important trees are?

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**THEPOETRYSOCIETY**

### Green Skills



### Suitable for

Key Stage 1

### Location

Indoors

### Season

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

### What you'll need

- This worksheet
- The leaf template (provided below)
- Scissors and glue
- A trunk to stick the leaves on (can be cut-out paper or can be drawn on whiteboard)

### Key vocabulary

**Personification** – pretending something can think and talk like a person

**Flood** – when water overflows and covers the ground

**Oxygen** – an important part of the air we need to breathe in

### Support and extension opportunities

If support is needed, learners can have sentence starters written out for them so they can fill in the gaps.

Learners can write their work onto a leaf template and display the leaves on a class tree.

Every year, The Poetry Society commissions a new poem about the Christmas Tree in Trafalgar Square. Leading children's poets have been commissioned, including Julia Donaldson and Joseph Coelho. A new learning resource for primary schools accompanies each poem, encouraging learners to delve deeper into trees. For an extension activity, find the poems and learning resources on the Poetry Society website.



### Learn about why plants matter

Plants give us medicine, food, energy, building materials and clean air. They are really important for life on our planet: without them, humans would not survive. But because we plant so many of some types of plant, like rice, it means other types of plants are struggling to survive. Today, we're going to think about trees. Trees are very important for keeping us and the planet healthy, so we need to make sure lots of trees keep surviving. Some of the ways trees support the planet include:

- they provide a home for animals like birds, insects and small mammals
- they support other life forms, such as moss and ivy, which grow on the tree
- they send messages to other trees using a network of fungi underground
- they cool the environment down by providing shade from the sun
- their roots protect soil from wind and rain. This means there is less likely to be a flood.
- they help humans by absorbing the carbon we breathe out and creating the oxygen we need to breathe in

Think about a tree you see often in your daily life, perhaps on the way to school or in a park you play in. Which other creatures or plants do you see using the tree? How do they use it?

You could even go out into the school grounds or local area as a class and find an important tree near you. Draw a picture of this tree and include all the other living things the tree supports. Remember, some of those things might be tiny, like ants! Some of this information is adapted from the Natural History Museum website.

### Read a Poem

We're going to read a poem by Yolanda Moran. Yolanda wrote the poem when she was ten years old. The poem is about trees and how they relate to many other forms of life. First your teacher will read it aloud on their own. Next they will read it again and you will follow along with your finger or lolly stick. After that, you will read the poem chorally.

I am the Tree

I drink Earth's blood,  
Eat the light,  
Host the snow,  
Feel winds flow,  
Fledglings' flight.

I've heard the night owl's hoots,  
Mushrooms balance on my roots  
Where flowers used to grow,  
They don't know how far they go

I've seen them all  
Between my leaves,  
In Autumn fall,  
In my bark sleeves.

Some say I wouldn't understand,  
Though my roots were years in the ground.  
I've seen hundreds of deaths,  
Chances, last breaths.

Soon the sun dies,  
The moon is born  
Drifting through polluted skies.  
Disguised as night, people mourn.

Ants march in steady rhythms.  
Same problems,  
Different decisions.

Yolanda Moran

*This poem was commended in the tree poetry challenge on The Poetry Society's Young Poets Network in 2019.*

### **Think about the poem**

Discuss these questions with a partner or as a whole class.

- There are lots of rhymes in this poem. Rhymes are words which end in the same sound, for example, 'snow' and 'flow'. Which other rhymes can you find in the poem? Underline them.
- Why do you think poets use rhyme?
- The poem is written as though the tree is speaking. The tree says 'I have seen' and 'my roots'. Why do you think it is important that we see the world through the tree's eyes?
- Can you think of any ways in which trees and humans are similar? How does the poem make us think about this?



## Write your own poem

We're going to write our own poems. In Yolanda's poem, she used personification, where she pretended to be the tree. She talked about what she could see, feel and hear as the tree. When she did that, it helped us really imagine what it would be like to be a tree, and helped us think about why trees are important.

They don't know how far they go  
I've seen them all  
Between my leaves,  
In Autumn fall,  
In my bark sleeves.

We are going to use personification and pretend to be the tree too! By using personification, our poems can help everyone realise why trees are so important. Here's how you write your poem.

1. We are going to use Yolanda's title, 'I Am the Tree'. Imagine you are a tree. Each line of your poem will be from the perspective of the tree.
2. First we are going to think about what we, as trees, look like. You can look at the picture you drew to help you, or imagine it in your memory. Are you tall? Thin? What colour is your bark? Your leaves? Start your sentence with 'I am...'
3. Next we will think about what we can see as the tree. Imagine you are the tree you drew a picture of, or that you are in the forest. Which creatures can you see around you? Which plants? Can you see the sun, or the moon? Your sentence starter is 'I see...'. Try to use lots of adjectives so we can imagine what it is like to be the tree!
4. Next we are going to think about what we can hear as the tree. What sounds are the creatures around you making? Can you hear any humans? Can you hear the wind? Start your line with 'I hear...'
5. Now, what can you feel? Are there creepy crawlies going up and down your trunk? Can you feel the heat of the sun? Start your line with 'I feel...'
6. Lastly we are going to ask humans to look after us and our habitat to protect the planet. What would you like to ask the humans to do? Start your sentence with 'Please...'
7. When you are happy with your poem, cut out the leaf and write your poem out on the leaf. You could also colour it in.
8. Ask your teacher to gather everyone's leaf poems together and make them into one big class tree. You could do this by sticking them on the board and drawing the trunk and roots below. Or you could lay it out on the floor.
9. When you have finished, you will have a class tree made up of everyone's poems! You can even do a performance of your poems.



**Your poem structure:**

I Am the Tree

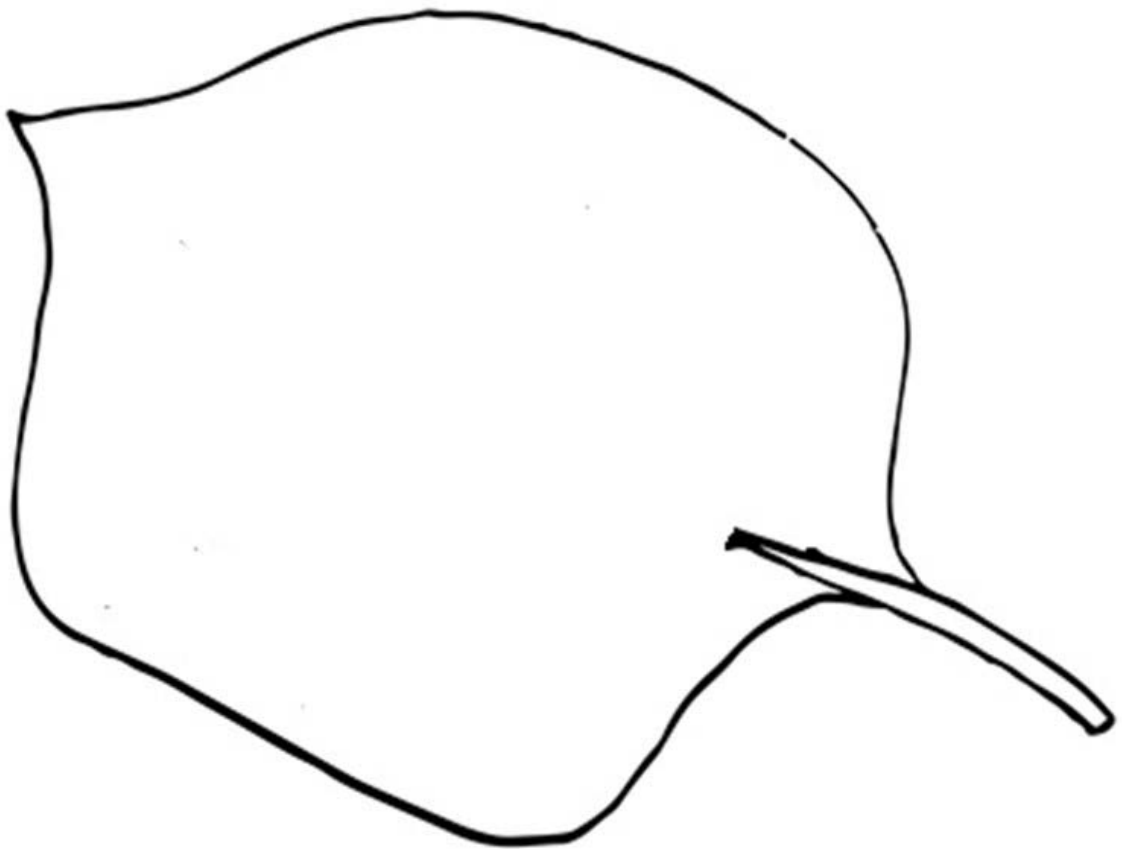
I am...

I see...

I hear...

I feel...

Please...



**Final Thoughts**

Today we have learned about the important role trees play in supporting other living things. We have read a poem about trees and written our own tree poems. Yolanda, the poet who wrote 'I am the Tree', was in primary school when she wrote the poem. As a primary school learner, now that you have written your poem, how do you think you can encourage adults to celebrate the value of trees?



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For more quality-assured learning resources visit  
[www.educationnaturepark.org.uk](http://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk)

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