



Branching Out (2nd-4th Grade) and Fantastic Foliage (K-2nd Grade)

The following pre-visit activities are great for both the Branching Out field trip and the Fantastic Foliage trip offered at the Huntsville Botanical Garden.

Branching Out: Trees are what it's all about in this program that gets your students investigating these important resources. We'll teach your children how to classify different trees, explain the different parts of a tree and how they all work together, the interdependence of trees and animals, and look for the different ways that trees can be damaged.

Fantastic Foliage: Discover the beauty of Fall as a guide takes you through an autumn adventure. Your students will investigate why leaves don't absorb water, discover why leaves change color, find out how boring their food would be without herbs, and each student gets to make a colorful leaf rubbing to take home.

Pre-visit activity—KWL Chart on Trees and Plants

It is important to apply what we currently know to what we are going to learn. This gives the students time to brainstorm what they already know and connect with the material they learn. They can think of what they know about trees, plants and how ecosystems work.

Objective: To apply what students already know about trees and prepare them for what they will learn while on the field trip

Materials:

- Journals or paper for each student
- Large piece of butcher paper
- Markers and pencils

Activity:

- Create a class KWL chart on what the students know about trees and what they want to learn.
- A KWL Chart is made up of 3 columns: Know (what is already known), Want to Learn, and Learned (what was learned by the experience).
- Have students brainstorm, on their own first, and then write it on a large chart for the class.
- Decide what you want to learn as a class and write that in the W column on the chart.
- Fill the L section of the chart when you get back from your trip to wrap up and summarize what was learned.
- You could "branch off" of this and have them research the things they wanted to learn that weren't covered in the trip.

Pre-visit Activity: Leaf collages

We will see a variety of leaves on the trip and this will give you the opportunity to compare them and also discuss the main parts of a leaf. It is a great idea to get a good selection of colors and shapes if possible.

Objective: To collect a variety of leaves and compare and contrast them with each other

Materials:

- Collected leaves
- Leaf diagram (<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/plants/leaf/label/simpleleaf/>)
- Mod-podge or glue
- Construction paper or poster board (per student or have one large piece for the whole class)

Activity:

- Introduce the parts of the leaf to the students using the leaf diagram. You can do a large one as a class or have the students do individual ones depending on the age group.
- Take a walk around the school and have students collect leaves from different trees and plants. You can also have them collect some from home to get more of a variety.
- When you have the leaves collected, pick a few and compare and contrast them as a class. This will show them how to do it on their own. Have the students compare and contrast a few leaves on their own as well.
- When they have finished looking at the leaves, make a collage with the leaves. Glue the leaves to the construction paper or poster board using Mod-Podge. Again, a large collage can be done as a whole class, too.
- Give the project time to dry and hang them up in the room or have the students take them home.

Additional Resources:

Books:

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

From Seed to Plant by Gail Gibbons

Leaves! Leaves! Leaves! By Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

Tree, Leaves and Bark (Take Along Guide) by Diane Burns and Linda Garrow

Websites:

The following websites include online activities for students to complete as well as information on the subject matter covered during the trip.

- Learn all about Herman the Worm and how he helps the ecosystem thrive. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/worms/index.cfm>
- Learn all about plant parts and their functions. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gpe/index.cfm>

Three excellent lesson plans on trees with experiments and writing involved can be used as both pre- and post-activities. <http://www.wesselmannaturesociety.org/PDF/TreemendousTrees.pdf>

This website offers a variety of tree related activities for Kindergarten. These can be used as both pre- and post-activities as well.

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/education_safety/education/arbormonth/teachersguide_kindergarten.pdf