

# TALL TREE TALES



There are folktales from many cultures that express their great respect for trees. Go to the library and find a folktale about trees. Look under 398.2, where you will find stories from around the world. When you find one you like, read the story out loud. Try different voices, sound effects and feelings. Act it out. Close your eyes and see the story in your imagination. Do not memorize the words, remember the outline of the story and use your own words. Tell it using your voice, your body, your words and your imagination. When you think you have it, tell it to your class.

The average American uses four trees per year. Please do the math with me. How old are you? Your age  $\_\_\_ \times 4 = \_\_\_\_\_$ . This is how many trees you have used. -  $\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_$  Subtract how many trees have you planted in your life. This final number is how many trees you owe the earth. As a family of four, my wife, twin daughters and I try to plant 16 trees a year to help offset our debt. How many trees will fit in your yard? Where else could you plant trees?

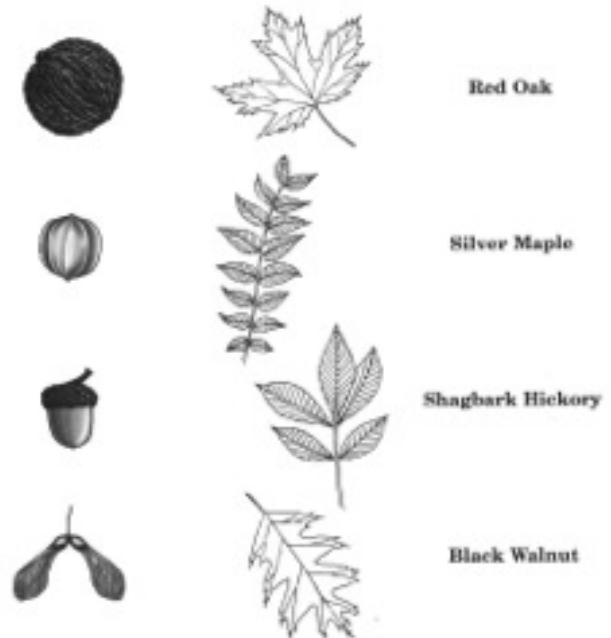
What is something you use made by a tree? Start with the object in hand and work backwards to the soil or start with the seed and work forwards, and write a story about how this thing was produced, harvested, shipped, processed and then finally used by you. How can you end this story where it began?

Coconut trees have seeds that can float on the ocean for years before finding an island upon which to grow. Cottonwood fluff can sail on a breeze for weeks. Acorns bribe squirrels into planting them. What is your favorite tree and how does it prosper? Maybe you love to eat apples or mulberries. Maybe you love maple syrup or the shade of an oak. Learn about the seed dispersal and life cycle of your favorite tree.

Collect 10 seeds from as many types of trees as you can and then plant them in a tray with soil. Make a chart of how many of each kind

sprouted. Compare your charts with your classmates. Take the seeds that sprouted and plant them in small pots as gifts or create a tree nursery to give the trees a few years head start and then plant them around your neighborhood.

*Draw a line from the name of the tree, to the correct leaf and to the proper seed. Use a different color for each line.*



Trees live for a very long time. Some trees can live for two hundred or two thousand years! Look around your neighborhood for the oldest tree you can find. What kind of tree is it? How old do you think it is? Imagine that it could talk. What would it say? Write a poem or story about the life of this tree and the things it has seen. From the trees point of view how have things changed in your neighborhood?

Go to the park and collect some leaves: learn to identify them and then write a series of poems or stories about each kind of tree.

Rewrite and edit your stories or poems to share with your class.

