

# For Creative Minds

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This For Creative Minds educational section contains activities to engage children in learning while making it fun at the same time. The activities build on the underlying subjects introduced in the story. While older children may be able to do these activities on their own, we encourage adults to work with the young children in their lives. Even if the adults have long forgotten or never learned this information, they can still work through the activities and be experts in their children's eyes! Exposure to these concepts at a young age helps to build a strong foundation for easier comprehension later in life. This section may be photocopied or printed from our website by the owner of this book for educational, non-commercial uses. Cross-curricular teaching activities for use at home or in the classroom, interactive quizzes, and more are available online. Go to [www.ArbordalePublishing.com](http://www.ArbordalePublishing.com) and click on the book's cover to explore all the links.

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## Trees Help Me Breathe!

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Humans rely on trees and other plants for the air we need to live! Air is made of a mixture of different gases. Most of the air is nitrogen, oxygen and carbon dioxide. When humans breathe in air, we absorb oxygen into our lungs and then exhale carbon dioxide.

Unlike animals that must eat to get energy, plants make their own energy through a process called photosynthesis. To complete photosynthesis, plants need carbon dioxide, water, and sunlight. Plants take in carbon dioxide from the air and water from the ground, through their roots. Chlorophyll in the leaves absorbs energy from the sunlight. Plants use the sun's energy to create a sugary food made from water and carbon dioxide. After absorbing carbon dioxide, plants create oxygen and release it into the air for humans and other animals to breathe.

One adult tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds (21.7 kg) of carbon dioxide each year. Some trees can also help filter out pollution from the air. Trees in large cities have to be highly resistant to air pollution. Other trees cannot survive in heavily polluted areas.



## What Else do Trees do for Me?

Living trees are necessary for humans to live and breathe. But after a tree dies, it becomes a natural resource that can be used by humans in many different ways! Look at the items below and see if you can tell which are made using parts of old trees.

cork



book



violin



chair



railroad crossties



pencils



picnic tables



notebook



playground woodchips



Answer: All of them!

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## Tree Parts

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Trees have many different parts that allow the plant to grow, live, and reproduce. Match the description to the image.



A.



B.



C.



D.

1. Like all living things, trees must reproduce. Trees grow **flowers** that create pollen. Pollen is carried from one flower to another by wind, water, and insects. After the flower has been pollinated, it produces a seed. Many tree seeds grow inside fruits, nuts, or cones. A seed can be planted and grow into a whole new tree.
2. Trees absorb energy from sunlight through their **leaves**. Flat and wide leaves take in more energy from the sun. Small and scaly leaves are better at surviving harsh weather conditions.
3. The **trunk** supports the weight of the tree and holds the branches, flowers, and leaves up off the ground. Many animals find or build their homes in trees. Some animals find or burrow holes in the trunk to make a nest inside the tree. Other animals build nests supported by the tree's branches.
4. Trees absorb water and nutrients through their **roots**. The roots are usually below the ground and anchor the plant in place so it doesn't fall over or blow away. Some trees have roots that extend deep into the soil. Other trees have shallow root systems that branch out to all sides just at or under the surface.

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## Trees and Animals

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Trees are an important part of the habitat for many kinds of animals. Many animals, including humans, eat food that comes from trees. Some animals eat bark or leaves. Others eat the fruits and nuts that trees produce.



Trees provide shade that keeps an area cool. Humans and other animals often rest under a tree to escape from the hot sun. In the heat of summer, shade from trees can mean a difference of 20°F (11°C)!

Many animals build their homes in and around trees. Spiders spin their webs from tree to tree. Rodents like gophers and mice dig holes near the tree's roots. This bird, a weaver finch, is building a nest in the branches of a tree.



Predators like this jaguar can wait in a tree for their prey and then pounce on them from above!

Prey animals like this squirrel can scurry up into a tree to escape from a predator on the ground.

