

44 - Trees

Methuselah is no ordinary tree. It's been alive for nearly 5,000 years! It started growing in 2831BC, long before computers, cell phones, TVs, and cars. Methuselah started growing before humans even invented paper. This tree is older than the pyramids of Ancient Egypt and the Great Wall of China! And it's still alive today.

How do trees like Methuselah help us breathe? During the spring and summer, the green leaves on a tree absorb energy from the shining sun and carbon dioxide from the air. Through a process called photosynthesis, the tree performs magic! Using the sun's energy and water the tree drinks up from the soil, it transforms carbon dioxide from the air into sugars. When the tree uses sunlight to transform carbon dioxide into sugars, it also produces oxygen that it releases back into the air. So, it's sort of like the tree is breathing. It inhales carbon dioxide and exhales oxygen, the reverse of humans.

Activities

1. Did you know that leaves suck up water like a straw? You can see how it works! Ask your adult to gather a green leaf or two, some water and food dye. You can find the directions and a great scientific explanation [here](#).
2. Trees grow tall and strong in the ground but not all plants need dirt to grow. Check out [this](#) experiment to see how roots grow and support a plant.
3. If you live in the north, it's hard to look at different leaves because it is winter! If you want to see what a tree looks like during all 4 seasons, [print](#) these seasonal trees and decorate them with your favorite colors.

Additional Resources

Getting outside and having an adventure can be hard right now. If you live in the north, it's cold. Maybe you even have snow on the ground. Many states also have restrictions on how many people can be at the park. [The National Parks Foundation](#) is a wonderful resource for children. They have national park tours with friends from Sesame Street, at home activities, and more. What national parks have lots of trees and which ones don't? Which one would be your favorite to visit and why?

Kid News

What do you think of when I say "dinosaur?" Is it a huge monster with scaly skin? Would it have rows and rows of sharp, pointy teeth? How about a little animal with lots of feathers? Scientists from England recently took a closer look at fossils in storage and realized it was a species they had never seen before! Sometimes scientists need to look at a fossil a couple of times before they can really figure out how the animal walked and looked. This new species may have had the ability to control its feathers like a peacock. Read more about this beautiful dinosaur [here](#).¹

¹ This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast www.WhoSmarted.com