

Why are trees important?

Curriculum for Excellence Level **Indoors or outdoors**

Time needed for activity **15 - 30 minutes**

Location **Indoors or outdoors**

Context

This activity plan highlights the importance of sustainably managing our natural resources, focusing on trees and woodlands and the multiple benefits they provide.

Curriculum links

Science

Planet Earth: Biodiversity and interdependence/Energy sources and sustainability

Technologies: Technological developments in society

- **SCN 2-02b**
 - **SCN 3-02a**
 - **SCN 3-04b**
 - **TCH 2-02b**
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Objectives

By the end of this activity learners will be able to:

- explain some of the reasons why trees are important
- describe which of those reasons is the most important to them
- understand that trees provide multiple benefits for people and the environment

Equipment and resources

- **Resource cards - Why are trees important?**
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What to do

The activity can be adapted and carried out in different ways (see 1 to 3). It can also be used to introduce or consolidate learning on the topic of trees, climate change and sustainability.

Ask the group why trees are important and discuss their ideas.

- 1** Independently or in small groups, hand out a set of the resource cards and ask learners to order the cards according to which they believe is the most important to the least important benefits that trees provide. Discuss outcomes.
- 2** With larger groups, give each learner a card. In groups, ask learners to arrange themselves so that they stand in order of the most important to the least important benefits that trees provide. Compare and discuss the similarities and differences between the groups.
- 3** Learners can work in pairs or small groups to sort nine resource cards using diamond ranking. Ask each group to arrange the cards into a diamond formation with the most important card at the top, two cards in 2nd row, three cards in 3rd row (medium importance), two cards in 4th row and their lowest importance card at the bottom. They need to get consensus as a group and can move the cards around until they reach an order with which they all agree.

Plenary

Explain that there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose of the activity is to encourage discussion and for the students to learn that trees can provide multiple benefits for people and the environment.

Key questions

- **What do you think is the most important benefit of trees?**
 - **How can we increase the amount of trees in our locality?**
 - **What do we use wood/timber for in school?**
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Adapting for different needs/abilities

Less able

- Remove some of the cards from the set.

More able

- Investigate if there are other benefits that trees provide and add to the card set.
- Complete the activity as a whole group.



Follow up activity/extension

- Create charts and graphs to illustrate how they sorted the cards e.g. a human bar chart: lay the cards on the ground and ask the children to stand in front of their chosen card in straight lines to make the 'bars'.
- Use natural art to illustrate a way in which trees are important.

Try our other woodland management activities:

- Activity plan - Seed dispersal
- Activity plan - Carbon calculator
- Activity plan - How a tree works

Additional resources

Looking for more learning resources, information and data? Please visit:

<https://www.owlscotland.org> and www.outdoorlearningdirectory.com

Alternative format, large print or another language, please contact:

Scottish.Forestry@forestry.gov.scot

Thank you to Natural Resources Wales for sharing this resource with Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland