

Arbor Day Activity #1

Teacher Instructions

For this activity, students will read “Trees” by Joyce Kilmer, then use a graphic organizer to record their thoughts about the poem. Next, they will answer a few discussion questions. Finally, students will write a poem of their own about trees. To help them think about what they want to say about trees, they will use a prewriting graphic organizer.

Preparation: To introduce this activity, start with an informational video on the [life of a tree](#) from the Arbor Day Foundation website. (This website is wonderful for [other related information and activities](#) as well.) Then, introduce some of the many different types of [trees](#) from the L. H. Bailey Hortorium Herbarium at the Cornell University website. If your students do not have a basic understanding of poetry elements, please review with them “[How to Read a Poem](#)” from Shmoop before continuing to the “Trees” by Joyce Kilmer activity.

Instructions to Student: The first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872 in Nebraska. Since that day, all 50 states celebrate the importance of trees. There are many ways people honor trees, including writing poems about their significance.

1. Read the “**Trees**” poem.
2. Use the **Poetry Graphic Organizer** to record your thoughts about the poem.
3. Complete the **Discussion Questions** handout.
4. Prepare to write a poem of your own about trees. To help you think about what you want say about trees, complete the **Tree Poem Prewriting** graphic organizer.
5. Write a poem of your own about trees using the **Tree Poem** note paper.

Handouts:

- “**Trees**” poem
- **Poetry Graphic Organizer**
- **Discussion Questions** handout
- **Tree Poem Prewriting** graphic organizer
- **Tree Poem** note paper

Resources:

- <https://www.arborday.org/>
- <https://www.arborday.org/kids/carly/lifeofatree/>
- <https://www.arborday.org/kids/carly/>
- <http://bhort.bh.cornell.edu/tree/list.htm>
- <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/joyce-kilmer>
- <http://www.shmoop.com/poetry/how-to-read-poem/how-to-read.html>