



Activities with Leaves

Description



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If you can't be outside with nature; the next best thing is to bring nature inside. Activities done with leaves can be done inside and outside. Fall is a great time to do activities using leaves, but any time of year will work if you have leaves. Some of these activities can be done with a class or groups such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and 4-H. Other activities can be done by yourself.



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Go on a hike and see how many different leaves you can collect. You can hike

alone or take a group of kids to collect leaves. Students could be challenged to see how many kinds of leaves they can find at home. Then bring the leaves to school and see how many different types of leaves each student found. Make sure students know about compound leaves versus simple leaves

and to choose leaves from trees.

Additional activities

- If you have young children, they could count their leaves.
- Create different types of graphs such as bar graphs and picture graphs using the information from how many people brought the same kinds of leaves.
- Use a group of leaves and sort them into groups based on similar characteristics or colors if it is fall.
- You can also put them into order by size from smallest to biggest.
- Another activity can be to match the leaf with the seed. For example, an oak leaf with an acorn and a maple leaf with a helicopter seed.



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Get to Know You



A get-to-know-you activity using leaves and exploring different trees can be

fun. Have kids bring a leaf from their favorite tree in their yard. If they don't have a yard with a tree, they can choose a tree in a local park or at the school. The activity is to have each student take a leaf from their favorite tree and find other students with a similar leaf. Then you can have the students discuss why they think their leaves are from the same type of tree. They could then ask each other what things they have in common with each other. This could also be done on what's different with the leaves and what's different with them. Depending on the age and ability of the students you can alter this activity.

Concerns and solutions



Compound leaf

- One thing that might happen is your students won't have access to a tree. Instead of them bringing a leaf from a tree, you could provide a few different options for all kids to choose from the same few tree choices.
- Another problem you might encounter is if students bring their leaf; they might not bring the whole leaf. Some leaves are compound and have many leaflets that makeup one leaf. If people don't understand how some trees have compound leaves and some have simple leaves, they might bring just one leaflet from a compound leaf. You can teach students the difference between the two types of leaves before you have them bring a leaf from home.
- Students might also bring a leaf from a plant and not a tree. You might have to teach them the difference between trees and other plants.
- All the students might bring a leaf from the same type of tree, so you won't have the variety.
- There might be students who bring a leaf that doesn't match with anyone else. They could still be put with someone else to discuss the differences or similarities.



Identifying Trees with leaves

Some people are afraid they won't know what type of tree the leaf is from, but with technology you can easily do this now.

- If you have an Apple phone or an Android phone; take a picture of the leaf.
- Then, on Apple phones, at the bottom of the phone is an i with a circle around it. If it has a little star by it, then touch the i". The phone will bring up what tree the leaf is from based on that picture.
- Androids have a different thing that allows you to circle the image you want it to look up. You first take a picture and then go to the picture. Hold the square on the bottom of the screen until the picture changes to a different shade. Then

you can circle the object you want it to search. It will show you what it thinks it is.

- Both phone types will give you one or two choices, and you can investigate further to see which one is correct. This is harder to do if they are all a type of maple. This technology is an amazing tool to use when you're out in nature and want to know what something is called such as a flower or tree. Some things don't work well for this technology and one thing is a rock. Rocks need certain tests done to narrow things down besides using just a picture of it.
- Get a leaf from each tree in the area and give each student one leaf. Then have students find which tree their leaf came from. Then have them learn all about that type of tree and teach what they learned to the class.
- Have students match the leaf to the name of the tree. This is a good review activity after students have learned the different trees.
- Have students use a tree identification book to try and figure out what tree their leaf came from.

Grouping People

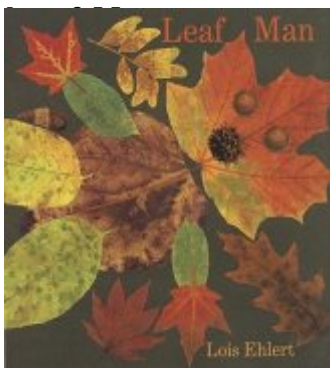
One way to group students for activities using nature is a leaf sort. However many groups you want the kids broken into, you will need that many different trees. Depending on how many students are in each of the groups is how many leaves of each tree will be required. Each student is given a leaf and then they find all the students with the same type of leaf. This is now the group of students that work together on whatever project or game you want them to do.





leaves and trees

Leaf Art



Reading the book [Leaf Man](#) by Lois Ehlert is a great way to inspire yourself or

your kids to create art with leaves. It shows many kinds of animals or creatures made with leaves and other natural items. After reading the book, try to make some different animals or creatures yourself using nature. When making your leaf man or creature you could just lay it all out and take a picture of it, or you could glue it down on paper. Glue dots might be less messy, than regular glue if glued down onto paper. I would recommend cardstock instead of just normal paper. The leaf men or creatures could be made with natural materials, or you could use googly eyes and pipe cleaners for legs and arms. Drawing with a permanent marker is another way to add detail to your leaf man or leaf creature. After creating your leaf man or leaf creature, you could write a story about an adventure your leaf man or leaf creature went on when the wind blew it away.

Leaf Rubbing



Leaf rubbing

Using leaves to create interesting designs and pictures can be a fun activity that all ages will enjoy. Put a leaf under a sheet of paper.

Then hold the paper and leaf still as you rub the side of a crayon over the paper revealing the texture of the leaf and its veins. You can use chalk and pencils instead of crayons to do this activity, but I prefer crayons. You can also create a tree identification book with leaf rubbings. To learn more about this activity please check out my blog post [Tree Identification Book](#).

Word Work



Leaf writing

You could practice writing words using leaves. The most important thing is having enough leaves to write a word. To make a letter in the word, lay the leaves on the ground or a flat surface and overlap them. Continue doing this until you have finished a letter. Then do the next letter and continue until the word is complete. I wouldn't glue these down but use the same leaves to do another word.

This activity could also be used for word work in reading. Have students make one word with the leaves. Then have students change one of the letters to a different letter. Next, have students read what new words they made.

If you want more tree ideas besides just using leaves, then check out my blog on [tree activities](#).

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