



wildsight  
EDUCATION

# Tree Life Cycle Search

Students will look for trees at each stage of their growth and decay. This is a great introduction to further exploration about growth and needs of living things.

 Journal and pencil (optional)

 Grades: all  30+ minutes

## Introduction

Trees, like human beings, have a life cycle that includes stages. Trees are “born” when a seed germinates, grow up, get old, and eventually die. Let’s go on a search for trees at each stage of this cycle.



## Tree Life Cycle Stages

**Seed:** Tree seeds come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Maple keys, pinecones, apple seeds and chestnuts are some examples.

**Seedling:** When a seed germinates, a shoot emerges. When the shoot comes out from the ground, it’s called a seedling.

**Sapling:** When the seedling grows bigger than 1 metre in height or so (it depends on what kind of species it is), it becomes a sapling. Saplings have flexible trunks and smooth bark (compared to when they are full-grown trees).

**Mature Tree:** Trees can live for decades, or even centuries. A mature tree often develops thicker and rough bark.

**Dead Tree:** Standing dead trees are often excellent habitat for many animals. We call them “wildlife trees.” When they fall and become “logs” and they continue to provide homes, as well as nutrients as they break down (decompose) on the forest floor.

## Activities

### K-Grade 3:

- Draw a picture of a tree at each stage of its life cycle and label it.

### Grade 4-7:

- Find a tree at each stage of its life cycle. Bring your journal and answer/do:
- Did you find at least 1 in each stage? Was it easy to find?
- For each of your finds, what do you observe? What do you wonder?
- Make a sketch of each.
- What species of tree is it? Write down the name if you know. If not, how can you find out?
- Create a life cycle drawing for one species of tree that you observed. You can use the format pictured at the start of this lesson, or you can try and make yours a circle.

## Extensions

### K-Grade 3:

- **Listen to this story:** In a Nutshell by Joseph Anthony, about the lifecycle of an oak tree.

### Grade 4-7:

- **Watch this video:** Bill Nye the Science Guy talks about lifecycles for plants and animals.



wildsight  
EDUCATION

© Wildsight 2020