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## Speak Up for Trees & Nature

TOPIC: LITERACY

THEME: Trees and the Climate

**Aim** – Interactive activities enabling pupils to experience, research and share their knowledge and opinions about the value of trees in helping to combat climate change, the threats trees face around the world and potential solutions.

### Introduction

Climate change, now often referred to as the climate crisis, is a big, global issue. The trees in our world have an important role to play in helping to combat climate change. Through sensory connection, research and discussion, these literacy-based activity ideas will help pupils begin to explore this issue whilst supporting the development of communication and presentation skills.

### Curriculum links – England

- Retrieve, record and present information from non-fiction
- Explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary
- Provide reasoned justifications for their views
- Assess the effectiveness of their own and others' writing
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings

**Curriculum links – Scotland** LIT 2-02a, LIT 2-06a, LIT 2-08a, LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-10a, LIT 2-15a, LIT 2-23a, LIT 2-25a

### Weblinks

[l.tl.org.uk](http://l.tl.org.uk) [youngtreechampions.org](http://youngtreechampions.org) [treecouncil.org.uk](http://treecouncil.org.uk)

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## Resources

- Blindfolds (for example strips of cut up sheet)
- Outdoor space with mature trees

### Activity 1: Hug a tree (sensory connection)

Pupils work in pairs to undertake a sensory walk amongst mature trees, taking it in turns to wear a blindfold and be the guide. The blindfolded pupil concentrates on using their senses – exploring smell, texture, size, sounds and feel of the environment compared to open space. Discuss experiences.

Playing in the woods does not need to be the reserve of the early years as this restorative playful activity demonstrates. It supports **emotional wellbeing** amongst more mature pupils as they get to know each other better and **build trust**. Pupils may need reminding to take care when guiding their blindfolded partner in this way building their capacity for kindness and **empathy**. The close encounter with the tree can also be a **mindful** experience as pupils are required to engage less well used senses to help them.

### Activity 2: Research (enquiring, reading, interpreting)

Spend some time finding out more about how trees in our world help address the global issue of climate change. Consider splitting into groups to research different themes, for example the man-made issues effecting trees, man-made solutions, links to the Sustainable Development Goals etc. How will you interpret and share your findings – a mind map, a PowerPoint presentation or a leaflet perhaps?

### Activity 3: Debate and discussion (communication and presentation skills)

Hold an outdoor debate on an agreed topic, for example the positives and negatives of deforestation. Split pupil group into two teams around a central space and agree that individuals either raise their hand when they wish to speak or move into the central space to address the opposing team. Agree a chairperson in advance. Debate for a given period of time then summarise the points raised.

Use the outdoor space to arrange a husting around a specific theme related to trees and climate change, including banner creation, an invited audience and soap box speakers.

## Weblinks

[lfl.org.uk](http://lfl.org.uk) [youngtreechampions.org](http://youngtreechampions.org) [treecouncil.org.uk](http://treecouncil.org.uk)

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### Take action

Use your experiences to help inform action, for example plant more tree species in your school grounds to increase the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> uptake, helping to reduce the impact of climate change.

### Key skills

- Working individually and as part of a team (collaboration)
- Developing confidence with presenting and speaking to a group
- Supports enquiry and applying learning in a real-life context



### Weblinks

[tli.org.uk](http://tli.org.uk) [youngtreechampions.org](http://youngtreechampions.org) [treecouncil.org.uk](http://treecouncil.org.uk)

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