



## **Fun in the Forest PreK - 2nd Grade**

*This Lesson is written to be directed and supervised by a parent or adult and is recommended for children in PreK to 2nd Grade*

In this Lesson Plan, kids will read more about the forest by listening to and reading books, making a nature journal, and exploring the library's databases! This Lesson can be simplified or made more complicated as desired.

This lesson contains activities that have been connected to Missouri Learning Standards using the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidelines. Although these lessons have been connected to a state learning standard, they are not intended to replace the educational curriculum provided through public, private, or at-home learning.

To access videos and databases, click on the hyperlinked text in the lesson plan. An active Christian County Library card is necessary to access select activities. For help, email [youthservices@christiancountylibrary.org](mailto:youthservices@christiancountylibrary.org) or call your local community branch.

## **1. Introduction to the Lesson**

- a. The forest is full of things to learn about. In this lesson plan you will study rocks, plants, animals, and more!
- b. Print out the documents and handouts to have ready for the lesson and gather any needed supplies.
- c. Use the instructions on Handout A to guide you through drawing a lovely scene in the forest.
  - i. DESE Standard: Mathematics K.NS.B 1.A.C

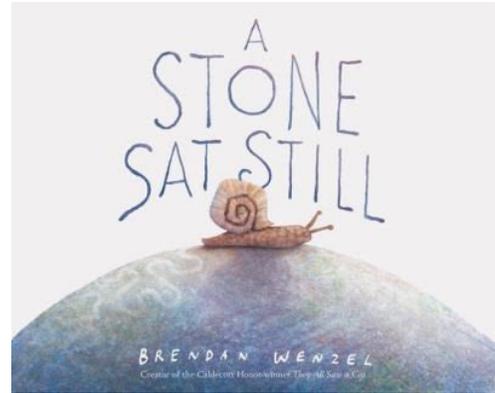
## **2. Create a Nature Journal**

- a. Create a nature journal with at least 20 pages.
  - i. A nature journal can be anything you want it to be and can be made in so many different ways. You can make your own journal from papers, fabrics, string, and yarn, or you can use an empty notebook and decorate it with your favorite natural items. Handout B has a few pictures of nature journals that other people have created.
- b. Find a quiet spot to sit outside or if it's too wet or cold find a window facing the outdoors. Draw what you see and make some observations. Observations are things that you learned by using your five senses to pay very close attention to something. While you are observing, ask yourself questions like: Are there any animals outside? What are they doing? How many plants do you see? What do they look like right now?
  1. DESE Standard: Science PS1.A, Health HPE1.A.

## **3. Study Rocks (and minerals)**

- a. Go outside and gather 10 different rocks. Try to look in different areas so that they will have different sizes, shapes, and colors.
- b. Write "ROCKS" on a blank page of your nature journal.
- c. Sort your rocks by size. How many big rocks do you have? How many small rocks? Are any of the rocks medium sized? If you have a kitchen scale you can weigh the rocks. Do you think the biggest rock will be the heaviest? Draw pictures of your rocks and write your observations down on your rock page.

- d. Listen to [A Stone Sat Still by Brendan Wenzel read by a librarian](#), or go to [coolcat.org](http://coolcat.org) to put it on hold and read yourself.



- e. Optional: Use Explora to learn more about rocks! Go to [christiancountylibrary.org](http://christiancountylibrary.org), click on research. Scroll down to “Explora Elementary” and click on the link. Search for the word “Rocks”. Look through the books, articles, and videos to answer the questions on Handout C. After you’ve answered the questions cut out the rocks on Handout C and paste them into your nature journal. *(If you don’t have access to the internet, check out a book about rocks from your library to do your research instead.)*
- i. DESE Standard: SCIENCE K.PS1.A.1, 4.ESS1.C1, 2.PS1.A.1, K.NS.A, K.3.A.a, 1.3.A.c, 2.3.A.a,b,c

#### 4. Forest Plants

- a. Write the word “PLANTS” on a blank page of your nature journal.
- b. There are all kinds of plants in the forest, but they all grow in basically the same way. Most plants have roots, a stem/trunk, leaves, and bear fruit. Draw and label a plant that is in your home or yard on the plant page in your nature journal. Use the pictures on Handout D to help you.
- c. Collect leaves and sticks that are in your yard. Use a tape measure or a ruler to measure the leaves and sticks you found. Write down your measurements in your nature journal. Sort the leaves and sticks by size. Which leaf is the longest? Which stick is the longest?

- d. A tree grows a new layer every spring and summer. The layer in the spring grows quickly and is a lighter color. The layer added in the summer grows slower and darker. Find a stump in your yard or a park. Draw a picture of the stump you found with all of its rings. Count only the dark rings to see how old that tree was when it was cut down.



- e. Optional: Dendrochronology is the scientific method of dating tree rings. Watch [this video](#) and check out Handout E to learn more about reading a tree's rings.
- f. Optional: Watch a seed grow. Place a pumpkin seed or bean seed in a ziplock bag next to a damp paper towel. Tape it to a window. Make sure the window doesn't get frosty in the winter, or get too hot in the summer. Keep the paper towels damp, but not soaking wet. Watch as your seed grows roots and sprouts. Draw pictures or take notes of the process in your nature journal. For an example or more instructions check out [this website](#).
  - i. DESE: 3.GM.B.1 2.LS2.A.1 3.LS1.B.1



## 5. OPTIONAL: Moss Terrarium

- a. Mosses are small, seedless plants that usually grow in damp, shaded places. More than 10,000 types of mosses grow in the world. Mosses can grow on dirt, trees, and rocks!
- b. Make a Moss Terrarium using the instructions on Handout G. If you have a magnifying glass use it to study the mosses up close. Draw a close up picture of some moss in your nature journal. What did it feel like? What color was it?
  - i. DESE: 2.VA:CR.1.B.3, 3.CR.A.3



## 6. Forest Animals

- a. Do some research on animal homes. You can find a book at your local library, check out an ebook on Hoopla, or find a variety of sources on Explora Elementary.
- b. Make a replica of an animal home like a birds nest, a foxes



- den, or a beavers lodge. Use sticks, rocks, leaves, grasses, and mud or clay to create your replica. Draw a picture of the den you created in your nature journal. What type of animal lives inside. Why is this home perfect for the animal that lives there?
- c. Optional: An ecosystem is made up of all of the living and nonliving things in an area. You can't add or take away anything from an ecosystem without having an effect on everything else around it. Take a look at the forest food chain and food web on Handout F. Then, find a food chain with living things in your yard. Use a page in your nature journal to draw the food chain that you found.
  - d. Optional: Check out these [live cams](#) on explore.org of animals in their homes.
    - i. DESE: K LSI.C.1

## 7. OPTIONAL: Humans in the Forest

- a. Make a forest xylophone. Use glass cups or mason jars that all match. Add sticks to one jar, water to another jar, rocks to a third jar, and grasses to the next jar. Leave the final jar empty. Use another stick to tap the sides of the jars. Make a beat or write a song using your forest xylophone. Do they make the same sound? What's different about the sounds they make?
- b. Put together a basic first aid kit. Here are some things you might want to include: bandages in all sizes, antiseptic wipes, gauze, thermometer strips, triple antibiotic ointment, lip balm, cotton swabs, burn cream, small scissors, nail clippers, tweezers, and stickers. Want to add more to your kit? Check out Washington Trails Association's [hiker's first aid kit list](#).
- c. Optional: Build a fort! Be creative and use what you have to build a fort. Look at Handout H for ideas to make with a tarp outside or a large blanket inside.
- d. Optional: Test out your internal compass. You will need an adult, a compass, a friend or two, and a place to walk. Try to find a path or trail with lots of twists and turns. Have your adult hold the compass. Before you start to walk, have your adult use the compass to show you which way is north. Then start walking. After you have gone



around a few twists and turns stop and guess which way is north. Then check if you were correct with the compass. Continue your walk and stop a few times to make your guesses. Did you end up getting better at finding north the more you walked? What did you use to “find your bearings” or decide where you were?

- e. Optional: Have an adult help you build a fire or use an oven to bake these delicious Campfire Orange Muffins. Recipe on Handout I.
  - i. DESE: MU: Cr1A.Ka

➤ **Explore more! Here are some optional links for more learning and fun!**

- If you enjoyed this lesson go to [christiancountylibrary.org](http://christiancountylibrary.org) to check out our other Lessons with the Library.  
<https://christiancountylibrary.org/lessons/>
- Do some rock testing -  
<https://rainydaymum.co.uk/testing-of-rocks/>
- Learn about purifying water with a solar still -  
<https://worldwaterreserve.com/potable-water/purification/how-to-make-a-solar-still/>
- Check out these plant identification apps -  
[https://www.learningonlineblog.com/2018/07/23/plant-identification-apps-for-nature-studies-and-science-lessons/?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=pinterest&utm\\_campaign=tailwind\\_tribes&utm\\_content=tribes&utm\\_term=402943178\\_13442544\\_217159](https://www.learningonlineblog.com/2018/07/23/plant-identification-apps-for-nature-studies-and-science-lessons/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=pinterest&utm_campaign=tailwind_tribes&utm_content=tribes&utm_term=402943178_13442544_217159)
- Find some birds in your area with these bird identification apps -  
<https://www.learningonlineblog.com/2018/04/02/bird-identification-apps-for-bird-watching/>

➤ **Learning Standard**

- f. **The learning standards attached to each activity can be found at the following links:**
  - i. [Missouri Learning Standards/Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\)](https://www.dese.mo.gov/standards)

## **Forest Scene - Following Instructions**

Follow the instructions below in order. You can draw your picture on the bottom of this page, or another piece of paper.

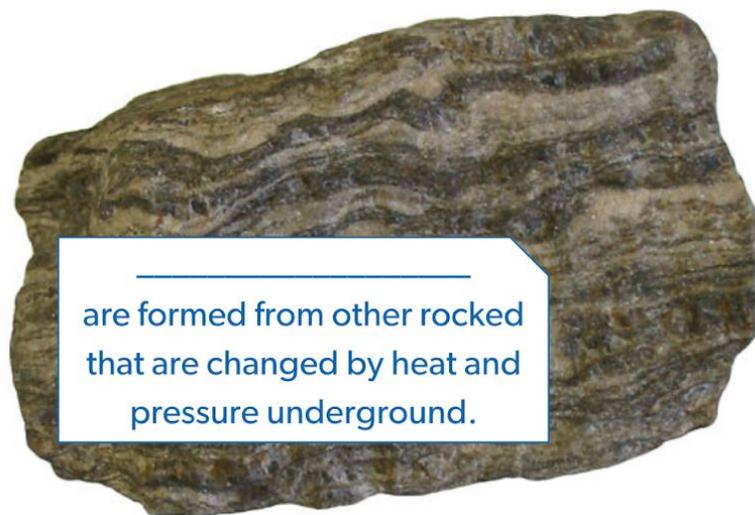
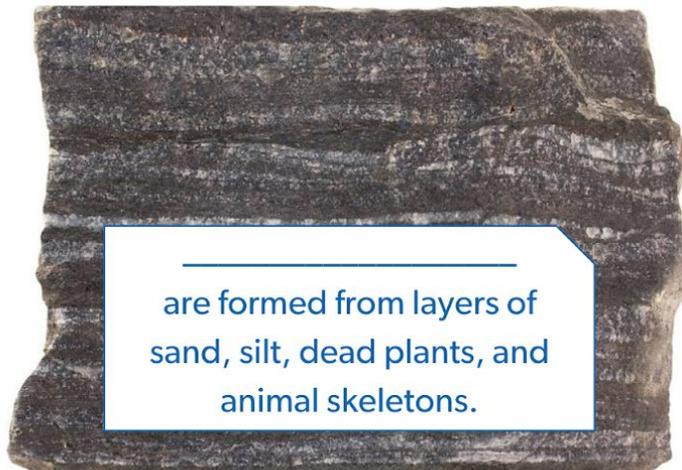
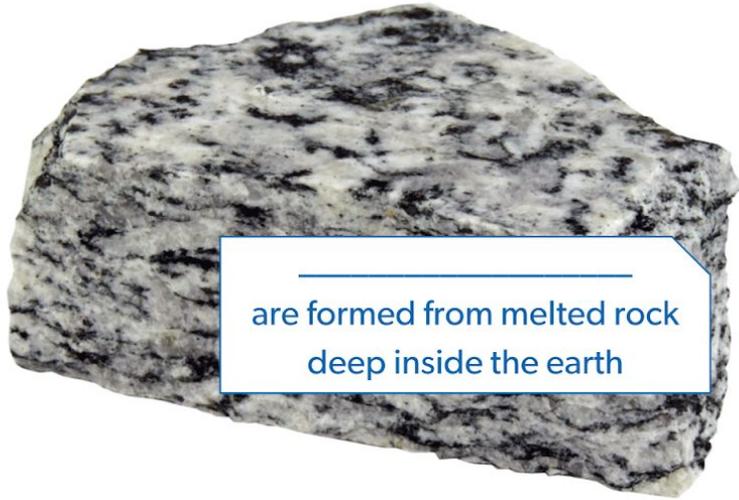
1. Draw one lake, pond, or stream.
2. Draw two BIG trees.
3. Add three forest animals. What are they?
4. Put four fish in the water. What colors did you choose?
5. Draw five smaller trees using two different shades of green.
6. Draw six flowers. Color half of them purple. What is half of six?
7. Draw 3 birds flying, 2 birds in a tree, and 2 birds on the ground. Count all of the birds. How many birds did you draw total?
8. Is it daytime or nighttime in your picture? Draw eight stars OR clouds.
9. What else belongs in your picture? Add nine new things.
10. Write your name at the bottom right of the page.

Your forest scene is complete!

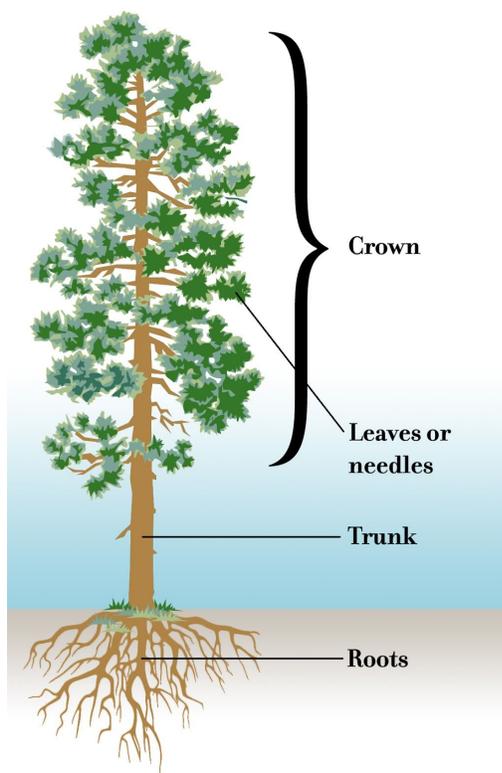
**Nature Journal Inspiration**



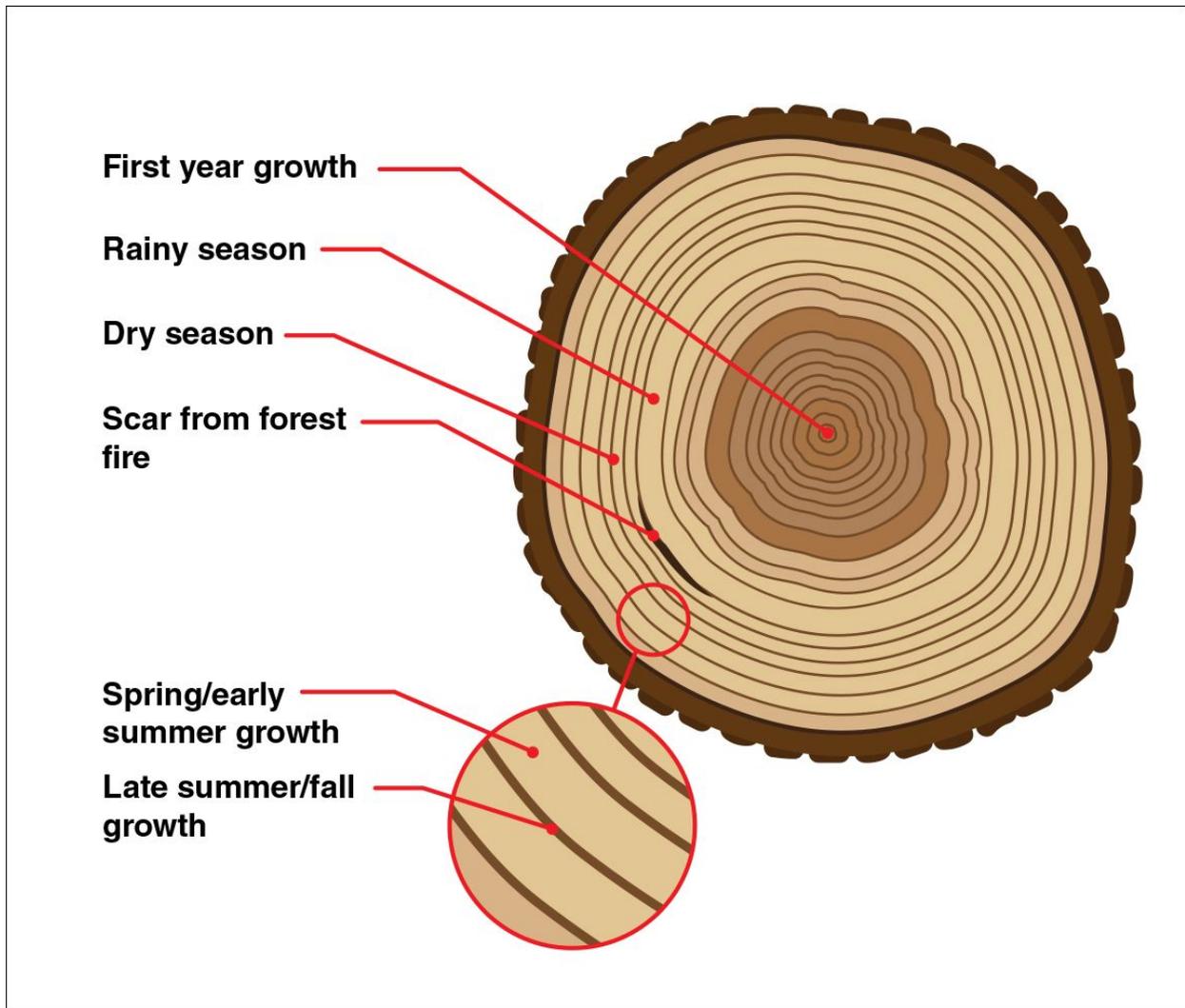
## Types of Rocks



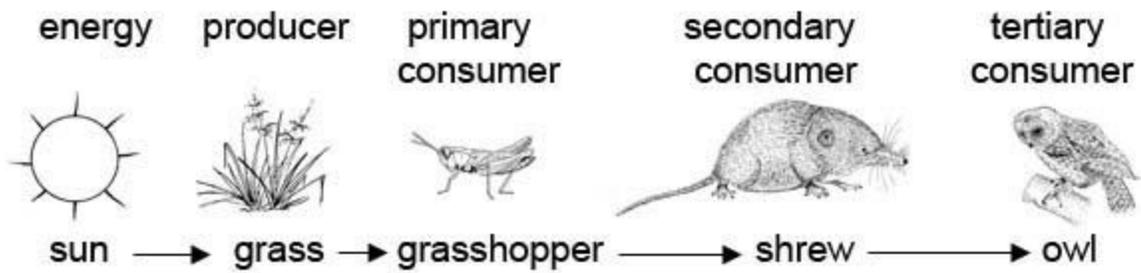
**Parts of a Plant**



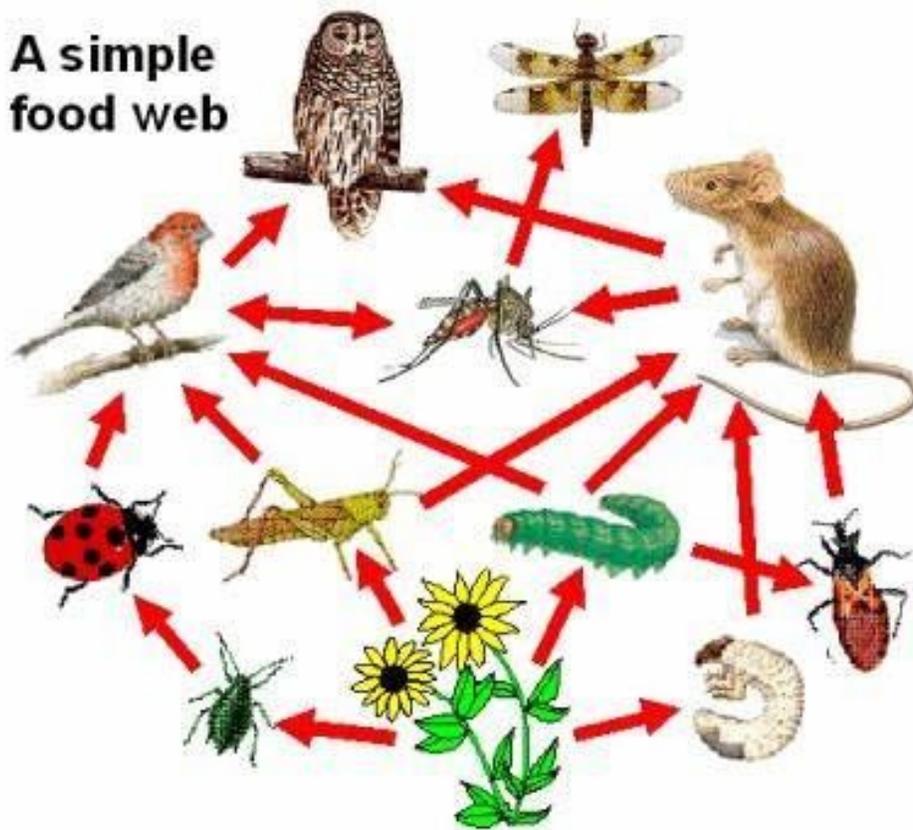
**Reading Tree Rings**



**A Food Chain** shows one path of energy.



**A Food Web** shows multiple paths of energy.



## *Make a Moss Terrarium*



1. Find a clear plastic or glass container that can be your terrarium. The container can be large like a mason jar or small like a baby food jar.
2. Place small rocks or aquarium gravel in the bottom of your container.
3. Add dry moss over the rocks.
4. Put soil over the dry moss and level it gently.
5. Find different mosses from around your yard. Check near trees and rocks. Carefully remove a section of moss. Keep them damp while you are searching.
6. Lay your moss on top of the soil and pat it down.
6. Include some fun extras like animal figures, action figures, sticks, or small rocks.



