

# Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree

**Grade Level: K-3**

**Approximate Length of Activity: One-two class periods**

## Objective

### Teacher

1. Aid the student to understand a sequence of events.
2. Help students understand the life cycle of a tree.

### Students

1. Develop an understanding of a story's sequence of events.
2. Learn the life cycle of a tree.

**Michigan Content Standards: (Language Arts) R.NT.00.01; R.NT.00.02; R.NT.00.03; R.NT.00.04; R.NT.00.05; R.IT.00.02; R.CM.00.02; R.NT.01.01; R.NT.01.02; R.NT.01.03; R.NT.01.04; R.NT.01.05; R.CM.01.02; R.NT.02.03; R.NT.02.05; R.NT.02.04; R.CM.02.02; R.CM.02.03; R.NT.03.03; R.CM.03.02**

## Background

The REAL TREES 4 Kids! project began early in 1999 in preparation for the 30th anniversary of Earth Day. Sponsored by the National Christmas Tree Association, the project's goal is to teach school-aged students the ins and outs of Christmas Tree production.

On April 2, 1999, Internet viewers got their first peek at curriculum materials prepared specifically for students, teachers and leaders in grades 2 through 5. Since that time, the set of materials has grown to include materials for middle and high school students.

In 2008, curriculum materials were made available for teachers of students in grades K through 2. These new materials were designed by elementary educator Michelle Drake as part of a grant through the USDA.

REAL TREES 4 Kids! has had over 169,000 visitors since April, 1999. However, this project is not limited to the Internet. Our REAL TREES team has shared information and activities with participants at the convention of the National Science Teachers Association as well as with visitors to the AgEarth celebration of Earth Day on the Mall in Washington D.C.

## Materials Needed

- The book "Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree" by Robert Barry
- Copies of "Writing Rhyming Words-Poem" worksheet
- Copies of "Writing Rhyming Words-Sentences" worksheet
- Copies of "Sequencing" worksheets



## Activity Outline

1. Read the story "Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree."
2. Have students identify the rhyming words they heard in the story. You might find it necessary to reread the story, stopping on each page, for them to successfully uncover all of the words.
3. As they say the words, make a list on the chalkboard.
4. After the list is complete, examine the reason for the rhyme. Discuss that some rhyming words end with the same letter combinations (green-seen) and others with different combinations producing the same sound (tree-delivery).
5. For additional experience with words that rhyme, ask students to complete one or both of the sheets in this packet. Students can complete them individually, in small groups or as a class.
6. Next, introduce (or review) the term "sequence" with students. Select a few common daily occurrences common to the group you are working with and ask them to tell you the sequence in which those are completed. Some options include the morning routine or making a sandwich.
7. Alternatively, you might choose to begin the discussion by performing a common task wildly out of sequence. For example, place your socks on over your shoes or pretend to begin the lesson with "closing statements" such as, "The End! Wasn't that a great story?" The sillier the better!
8. Discuss the importance of sequence in understanding a story. Ask students to retell the events of "Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree."
9. Have them complete the sequencing sheet in this packet. Make the book available for students who need to review the story.
10. If students need additional practice, write the events of the story in sentence strips and ask students (individually or as a class) to place the strips in order from what happens first to what happened last.

## Discussion Questions

1. Describe the life cycle of the tree.
2. Why is it important to share?
3. Can you retell at least three main events from the story?

## Book Resources

1. The lesson centered around the book, "Merry Christmas Geraldine" by Holly Keller, found at REAL TREES 4 Kids! [www.realtrees4kids.org](http://www.realtrees4kids.org).
2. The lesson centered around the book, "Why Christmas Trees Aren't Perfect" by Richard H. Schneider found at REAL TREES 4 Kids! [www.realtrees4kids.org](http://www.realtrees4kids.org).



## Related Activities

1. Activities related to science
  - Discuss the life cycle of a conifer tree with the students. Share with them the sequence of events from seed to seed. You can find more information about the life cycle of a REAL TREE at <http://www.realtrees4kids.org/threefive/getgrowing.htm>.
  - Draw a large circle on the chalkboard and label it with the steps of a conifer life cycle (Seeds grow to seedlings. Seedlings develop into mature trees which develop cones. Pollination occurs and cones develop seeds. Seeds drop to the ground to germinate and create additional seedlings.) Use an image appropriate for each stage of development. Draw arrows from one part to the next to indicate that the cycle never ends.
  - Ask students to complete the "Life Cycle of a Tree" worksheet.
2. Activities related to social studies
  - Discuss with the students how Mr. Willowby shared with Miss Adelaide. Pose leading questions to lead students to examine the concepts of sharing and reuse.
  - Some sample questions are:
    - What did Mr. Willowby share? (treetop)
    - What could have been done with the leftover tree tops?
    - How might the leftover treetops have been reused?
  - Then discuss what things your students share with each other and with their families. How does sharing make them feel? How does it make the person they shared with feel? What are good things to share with others? What are some things you should not share with others?
3. Activities related to art
  - Cut large construction paper length-wise. You will need enough paper so that each student will have one sheet. For younger students, fold the paper into 6 equal sections, write the "Life Cycle of a Tree" and student's name in the first section, and number the remaining parts 1-5. Older students can assist in this part of the preparation!
  - Ask students to draw detailed pictures of each step in the tree life cycle, one step in each part. For example, in part one, the student might draw a seed in the ground. In part two, the drawing might contain a seed that has grown into a seedling. In part three, the seedling might become a mature tree. In part four, the mature tree may grow cones. Part five may show the cones dropping their seeds.
  - Invite students to include things that the tree would need to grow-sun, soil and water. Ask students to write captions for each step above their drawings.
  - When finished, staple the two ends of the paper together on the top and the bottom with the drawings on the outside. This forms a cylinder shape with their drawings to show that a life cycle never ends.
4. Activities related to math
  - Write addition and subtraction problems for your students to solve inside the Christmas tree outline provided in this lesson.

*Acknowledgement: Permission to reproduce lesson granted from The National Christmas Tree Association.*



# Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree

## Language Arts: Writing Rhyming Words

Directions: Write a poem telling about the story using rhyming words from the list on the chalkboard or use your own rhyming words. Be sure not to repeat the story exactly.

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# Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree

## Language Arts: Writing Rhyming Words

Directions: Write sentences telling about the story using the rhyming words from the list on the chalkboard. Draw a picture of your favorite part of the story in the box provided.

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# Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree

## Language Arts: Sequencing

Directions: Number the events from the story in the correct order.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Benjamin Rabbit found a Christmas Tree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Willowby's tree arrived at his house.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Barnaby Bear almost got hit in the eye by the tree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mistletoe Mouse saw the tiny tip of a tree in the snow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Frisky Fox spied the tree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Willowby gave the tree top to Miss Adelaide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Timm, the gardener, saw the tree top in the trash.

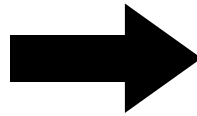
# Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree

## Science: Life Cycle of a Tree

Directions: Number the sentences in order to show the life cycle of a conifer tree.

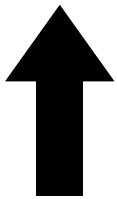
- \_\_\_\_\_ The cones drop seeds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The stem or trunk grows above the ground.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The seed of a tree is planted and roots begin to grow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The tree grows branches and needles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cones grow on the tree.

Directions: Starting with line 1, draw a picture for each step of the tree life cycle.



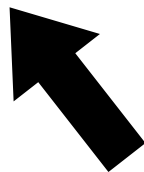
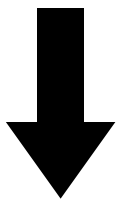
5. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_



4. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_



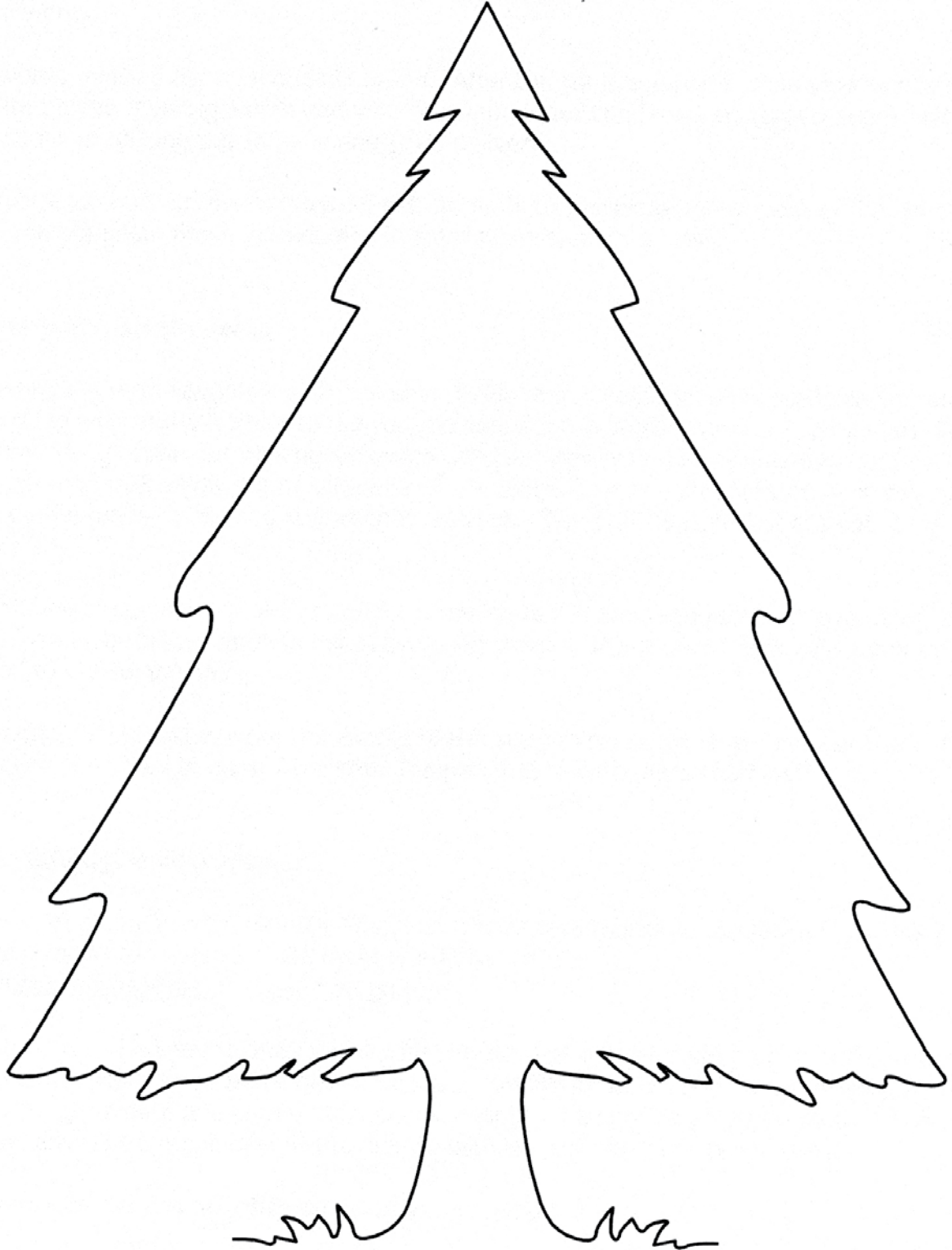
3. \_\_\_\_\_



# Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree

## Math

Directions: Complete the addition and subtraction problems that your teacher provides.





# Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree

## Language Arts: Sequencing

Directions: Number the events from the story in the correct order.

- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Benjamin Rabbit found a Christmas Tree.
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Willowby's tree arrived at his house.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Barnaby Bear almost got hit in the eye by the tree.
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Mistletoe Mouse saw the tiny tip of a tree in the snow.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Frisky Fox spied the tree.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Willowby gave the tree top to Miss Adelaide.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Timm, the gardener, saw the tree top in the trash.

