A vibrant illustration of a young girl with short brown hair and bangs, wearing a blue sweater over a plaid shirt. She is smiling and holding a large, reddish-brown leaf in her hands. The background is a lush autumn landscape with green grass, scattered leaves, and a tree with colorful foliage under a clear blue sky.

Teaching Activity Guide

Count Down to Fall

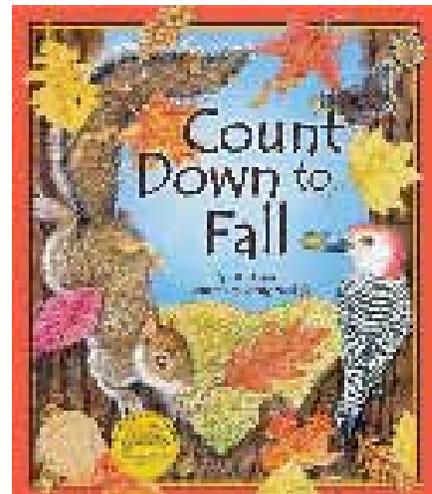
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by Fran Hawk
illustrated by Sherry Neidigh

How to Use This Activity Guide (General)

There are a wide variety of activities that teach or supplement all curricular areas. The activities are easily adapted up or down depending on the age and abilities of the children involved. And, it is easy to pick and choose what is appropriate for your setting and the time involved. Most activities can be done with an individual child or a group of children.

For teachers in the classroom: We understand that time is at a premium and that, especially in the early grades, much time is spent teaching language arts. All Arbordale titles are specifically selected and developed to get children excited about learning other subjects (science, geography, social studies, math, etc.) while reading (or being read to). These activities are designed to be as comprehensive and cross-curricular as possible. If you are teaching sentence structure in writing, why not use sentences that teach science or social studies? We also know and understand that you must account for all activities done in the classroom. While each title is aligned to all of the state standards (both the text and the For Creative Minds), it would be near impossible to align all of these activities to each state's standards at each grade level. However, we do include some of the general wording of the CORE language arts and math standards, as well as some of the very general science or social studies standards. You'll find them listed as "objectives" in italics. You should be able to match these objectives with your state standards fairly easily.

For homeschooling parents and teachers in private schools: Use as above. Aren't you glad you don't have to worry about state standards?

For parents/caregivers: Two of the most important gifts you can give your child is the love of reading and the desire to learn. Those passions are instilled in your child long before he or she steps into a classroom. Many adults enjoy reading historical fiction novels . . . fun to read but also to learn (or remember learning) about historical events. Not only does Arbordale publish stories that are fun to read and that can be used as bedtime books or quiet "lap" reading books, but each story has non-fiction facts woven through the story or has some underlying educational component to sneak in "learning." Use the "For Creative Minds" section in the book itself and these activities to expand on your child's interest or curiosity in the subject. They are designed to introduce a subject so you don't need to be an expert (but you will probably look like one to your child)! Pick and choose the activities to help make learning fun!

For librarians and bookstore employees, after-school program leaders and zoo, aquariums, nature center, park & museum educators: Whether reading a book for story time or using the book to supplement an educational program, feel free to use the activities in your programs. We have done the "hard part" for you.

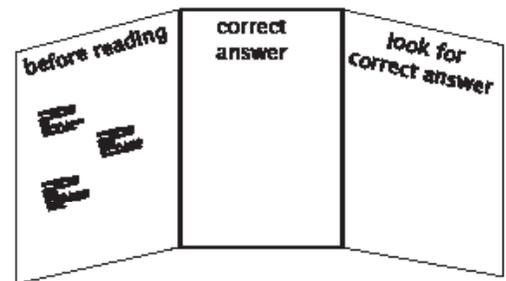
What Do Children Already Know?

Young children are naturally inquisitive and are sponges for information. The whole purpose of this activity is to help children verify the information they know (or think they know) and to get them thinking “beyond the box” about a particular subject.

Before reading the book, ask the children what they know about the subject. A list of suggested questions is below. The children should write down their “answers” (or adults for them if the children are not yet writing) on the chart found in Appendix A, index cards, or post-it notes.

Their answers should be placed on a “before reading” panel. If doing this as a group, you could use a bulletin board or even a blackboard. If doing this with individual children, you can use a plain manila folder with the front cover the “before reading” panel. Either way, you will need two more panels—one called “correct answer” and the other “look for correct answer.”

Do the children have any more questions about the subject? If so, write them down to see if they are answered in the book.



After reading the book, go back to the questions and answers and determine whether the children’s answers were correct or not.

If the answer was correct, move that card to the “correct answer” panel. If the answer was incorrect, go back to the book to find the correct information.

If the child/children have more questions that were not answered, they should look them up.

When an answer has been found and corrected, the card can be moved to the “correct answer” panel.

Pre-Reading Questions

What do you think the book is about by looking at the cover (or one or two of the inside illustrations)? Sometimes it is easy to tell from the cover, other times it is not.

What does the cover illustration show?

Does the title tell you what the book is about?

Who is the author?

Who is the illustrator?

What does “count down” mean?

What are some things you might “count down” to?

Do all leaves look alike?

What happens to tree leaves in the fall?

How are fall leaves similar to or different from summer leaves?

What are some things animals do in the fall?

What are some types of trees?

What are some ways that animals use trees?

What are some ways that people use trees?

What animals eat acorns and pinecones?

Observation Skills: Art Scavenger Hunt

Objective Core Language Arts Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

How does the illustrator show you what the leaves look like in other seasons?

How does the illustrator show you what the trees look like?

How does the illustrator show you what the seeds (nuts) look like?

Language Arts & Science: Five Senses

Objective Core Language Literature 4: Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

Re-read the story and write down any words that relate to the five senses:

Touch	Taste	Sight	Smell	Hearing

Language Arts & Science: Basic Needs

Objective: Describe the basic needs of living things and how they are met.

Plants need water, oxygen, food, light and space to grow and reproduce; animals need water, oxygen, food, and shelter/space to grow and reproduce.

Re-read the story and write down any words that relate to how the plants or animal(s) meet their basic needs.

Plant/ Animal	water	oxygen	food	light	space

If not mentioned in the text, are there any indications in the illustrations of how these needs are met? Can you describe, draw, or write an explanation of how the needs are met?

Cross-Curricular Vocabulary Activities

Objective Core Language Arts:

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content.

Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., duck is a bird & the verb to duck). Use words & phrases acquired through conversations, reading/being read to, and responding to texts.

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade level topic or subject area.

Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.

Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Use frequently occurring adjectives.

Vocabulary game: This activity is a very general idea and is designed to get children thinking of vocabulary words that will then be used as the beginning vocabulary list for a science lesson.

Select an illustration from the book and give the children a specific length of time (five minutes?) to write down all the words they can think of about the particular subject. It is helpful to project an illustration on a whiteboard. Use eBook or book preview found at www.ArbordalePublishing.com.

The children's word list should include anything and everything that comes to mind, including nouns, verbs, and adjectives. At the end of the time, have each child take turns reading a word from his/her list. If anyone else has the word, the reader does nothing. However, if the reader is the only one with the word, he/she should circle it. While reading the list, one person should write the word on a flashcard or large index card and post it on a bulletin board or wall.

At the end, the child with the most words circled "wins." And you have a start to your science vocabulary list. Note: if a child uses an incorrect word, this is a good time to explain the proper word or the proper usage.

Glossary/Vocabulary words: Word cards may be used (see Appendix) or have children write on index cards, a poster board, or on a chalkboard for a "word wall." If writing on poster board or chalkboard, you might want to sort words into nouns, verbs, etc. right away to save a step later if using for Silly Sentences. Leaving the words posted (even on a refrigerator at home) allows the children to see and think about them frequently. The glossary has some high-level words. Feel free to use only those words as fit your situation.

Using the Words: The following activities may be done all at once or over a period of several days.

- Sort vocabulary words into nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. and write what they are on the backs of the cards. When the cards are turned over, all you will see is "noun," etc. (these can then be used for the "silly sentences" on the next page).
- After the cards have been sorted, go over the categories to ensure that all cards have been placed correctly. (Mistakes are a great opportunity to teach!)
- Choose two words from each category and write a sentence for each word.
- Write a story that uses at least ten vocabulary words from the word sort.
- Have children create sentences using their vocabulary words. Each sentence could be written on a separate slip of paper. Have children (individually or in small groups) sort and put sentences into informative paragraphs or a story. Edit and re-write paragraphs into one informative paper or a story.

Silly Sentence Structure Activity: This "game" develops both an understanding of sentence structure and the science subject. Use words from the "word wall" to fill in the blanks. After completing silly sentences for fun, have children try to fill in the proper words by looking for the correct information in the book.

Word Bank

Adjective	Noun			Verb
	Trees	Animals	Other	
bright	aspen	bear	acorns	absorb
brown	beech	beaver	autumn	breathe
colored	birch	beetle	bark	build
eight	chestnut	birds	canoes	carry
five	dogwood	butterfly	cones	chew
four	linden	cardinal	flowers	collect
golden	maple	cat	flower	cut
green	oak	chipmunks	food	drift
hard	pine	deer	fruit	eat
lobed	sweet gum	dog	furniture	fall
needled		elk	houses	float
nine		frog	leaves	flutters
one		grasshopper	needles	give
orange		lizard	nuts	hide
oval		moose	oxygen	pile
prickly		owl	pinecones	protect
purple		possum	pods	pull
quaking		rabbit	predators	reach
red		raccoon	prey	shimmers
seven		squirrels	roots	spin
six		turtle	seeds	thump
smooth		woodpecker	stems	tumble
ten			sugar	twirl
three			sunlight	twists
toothed			syrup	
two			trunks	
yellow			wood	

Language Arts: Word Families & Rhyming Words

Language Arts, Reading Standards: Foundational Skills, Recognize and produce rhyming words.

Word families are groups of words that have some of the same combinations of letters in them that make them sound alike...or rhyme. For example ad, add, bad, brad (Brad), cad, Chad, clad, dad, fad, gad, glad, grad, had, lad, mad, pad, plaid (silent 'i'), sad, shad, and tad all have an "ad" letter combination and rhyme.

- Find and write down rhyming words in the poem. A sample is done for you.
- Are they in the same word family?
- If so, circle the combination of letters that are the same.
- Can you think of more words in the word family?

Rhyming words are:

HARD and YARD

They **are** / are not from the same word family.

Other words that rhyme are:

card, guard, hard, lard, shard, yard

Rhyming words are:

and

They are / are not from the same word family.

Other words that rhyme are:

Rhyming words are:

and

They are / are not from the same word family.

Other words that rhyme are:

Rhyming words are:

and

They are / are not from the same word family.

Other words that rhyme are:

Language Arts: Sequence Sentence Strips

Cut into sentence strips, laminate if desired, and place in a “center.” Have children put the events in order. Children may work alone or in small groups. Cards are in order but should be mixed up when cut apart.

Objective Core Language Arts:

Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.

Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

Ten sweet gum leaves

Nine dogwood leaves

Eight beech tree leaves

Seven pine cones

Six linden leaves

Five prickly chestnut cases

Four oak leaves

Three-pointed maple leaves

Two birch leaves

One quaking aspen leaf

Word Search

Find the hidden words. Even non-reading children can match letters to letters to find the words! Easy—words go up to down or left to right (no diagonals). For older children, identify the coordinates of the first letter in each word (number, letter).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	D	O	T	C	P	U	R	P	L	E
2	O	A	O	H	B	I	R	C	H	I
3	G	B	E	E	C	H	D	O	G	Y
4	W	E	D	S	L	I	M	O	A	T
5	O	X	A	T	L	E	A	V	E	S
6	O	R	A	N	G	E	P	O	W	L
7	D	O	S	U	R	G	L	A	K	E
8	B	I	P	T	E	D	E	K	I	N
9	A	P	E	R	E	F	R	O	G	R
10	P	I	N	E	N	O	N	L	H	Y

---, --- ASPEN

---, --- CHESTNUT

---, --- MAPLE

---, --- LEAVES

---, --- ORANGE

---, --- BEECH

---, --- DOGWOOD

---, --- OAK

---, --- GREEN

---, --- DOG

---, --- BIRCH

---, --- OWL

---, --- PINE

---, --- RED

---, --- FROG

Edible Sorting and Classifying Activity

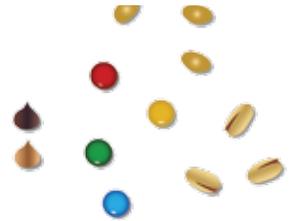
Objective Core Language Arts Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.

Objects and materials can be sorted and described by their properties. (color, shape, size, weight and texture)

Use whole numbers, up to 10, in counting, identifying, sorting, and describing objects and experiences.*

Gather a cup of edible “sorting items.” For example:

- As many different kinds of M&Ms as you can find
- Chocolate & peanut butter chips
- Hershey Kisses
- Peanuts or other type of nuts



Ask the children to sort the items into groups. There is no right and wrong, only what makes sense to the child. When finished, ask the child:

What feature or attribute (color, size, ingredient, etc.) did you use to sort the items?

- Are there some items that fit more than one group or don't fit any group?
- If so, how did the child decide which attribute was more important?
- 1. How are various objects similar and different?
- Is it easy to sort or were there some items that were a little confusing?

If more than one person did this, did everyone sort by the same attribute? To extend the learning, graph the attributes used to sort the items (blank graph below).

Graph the attributes that children used to sort their items. (Graph provided on next page).

What was the most common attribute (size, shape, color, etc.) used?

Plants and leaves can be sorted too. What are some attributes you might use to sort leaves?

- By color
- By size
- By shape
- By leaf edge (smooth, toothed, lobed, needled)

Describe how the leaves are alike or are different.

Sorting Cards

Objective: Classify organisms according to one selected feature, such as body covering, and identify other similarities shared by organisms within each group formed.

Describe several external features and behaviors of animals that can be used to classify them (e.g., size, color, shape of body parts).

Identify observable similarities and differences (e.g., number of legs, body coverings, size) between/among different groups of animals.

Compare and contrast

Collecting your own leaves for sorting is a great activity for young children. However, if that is not possible, these cards may be used instead.

Card Games:

Sorting: Depending on the age of the children, have them sort cards by color, shape, teeth lobes.

Memory Card Game: Make two copies of each of the sorting card pages and cut out the cards. Mix them up and place them face down on a table. Taking turns, each player should turn over two cards so that everyone can see. If the cards match, he or she keeps the pair and takes another turn. If they do not match, the player should turn the cards back over and it is another player's turn. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.

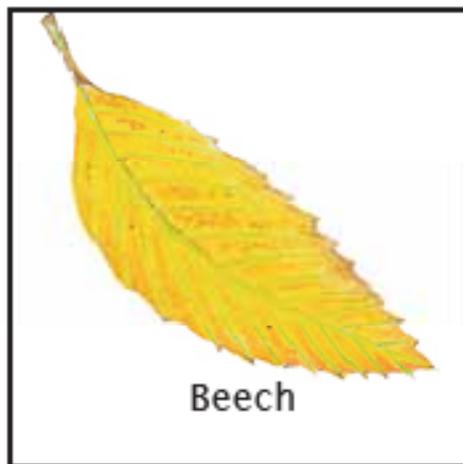
Who Am I? Copy and cut out the cards. Poke a hole through each one and tie onto a piece of yarn. Have each child put on a "card necklace" without looking at it so the card hangs down the back. The children get to ask each person one "yes/no" question to try to guess "what they are." If a child answering the question does not know the answer, they should say they don't know. This is a great group activity and a great "ice-breaker" for children who don't really know each other.



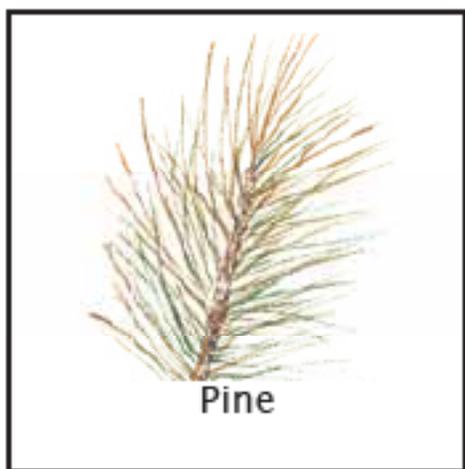
Sweet Gum



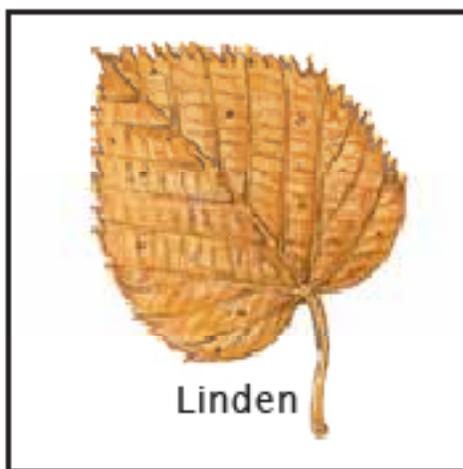
Dogwood



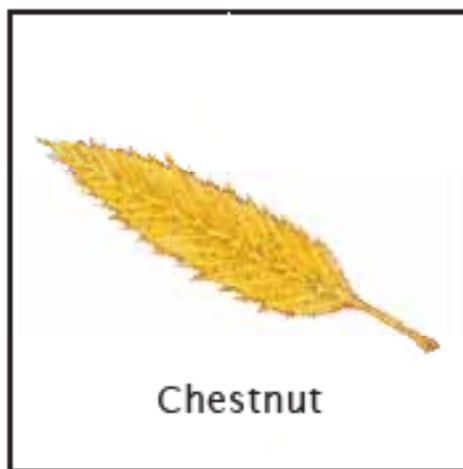
Beech



Pine



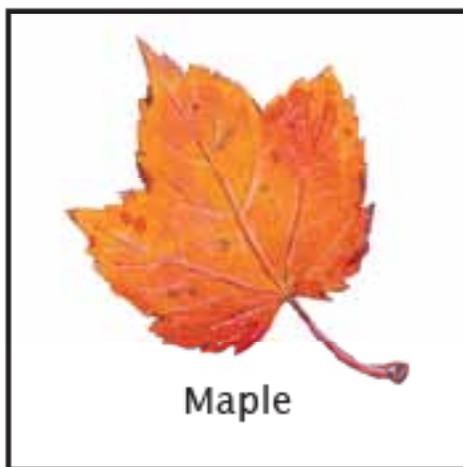
Linden



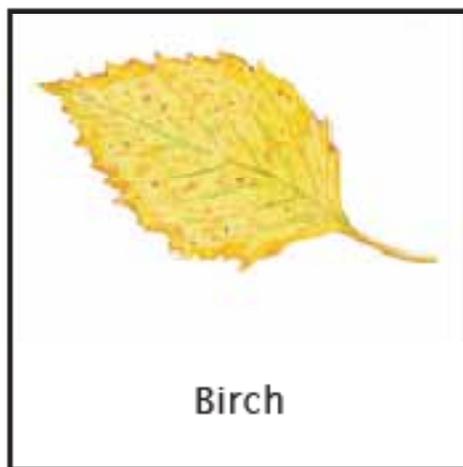
Chestnut



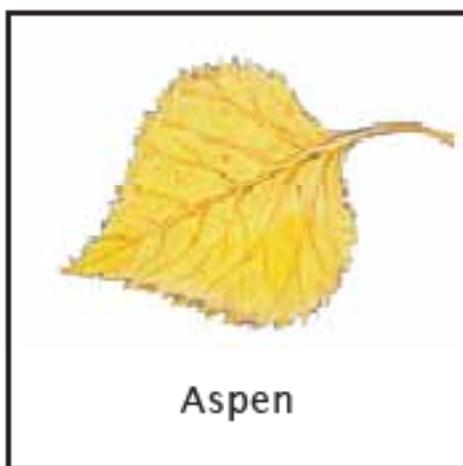
Oak



Maple



Birch



Aspen

Science Journal (Vocabulary)

stems

my definition

my drawing

roots

my definition

my drawing

seeds

my definition

my drawing

leaves

my definition

my drawing

Renewable Resources

Objective: Define the term resources, e.g., trees, books

Recognize that resources are renewable, recyclable, and non-renewable.

Resources can be used in various ways.

Describe a variety of the earth's natural resources (e.g., water, forests, and oil) and ways in which people use them.

Describe the role of resources in daily life.

Look at the list of items below and decide whether you think we get or can make the items from trees:

	from trees	not from trees
air -- the oxygen we breathe		
apples		
baseball bats		
books		
cardboard boxes		
crutches		
furniture		
garden mulch		
gum		
houses		
maple syrup		
nuts		
paper		
pencils		
rubber		
sawdust		
toothpaste		
wood floors		
your desk at school		

Identify the Seasons

Objective: Recognize daily and seasonal weather changes.

Students will understand that some events in nature have a repeating pattern. Weather changes from day to day, but things such as temperature or precipitation tend to be similar (high, medium or low) in the same months every year.

Describe the patterns and characteristics of the four seasons, and how these changes in weather influence plants, animals, and humans.

Observe and describe changes in behavior of animals as the seasons change.

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
 <p>Green leaves</p>				
 <p>Colorful trees</p>				
 <p>Colorful leaves</p>				
 <p>Hibernating bears</p>				
 <p>Flowering dogwood</p>				
 <p>Deer eating bark (in snow)</p>				
 <p>Cardinal in snow</p>				

Math Cards and Counting

Objective Core Mathematics Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count. (up to 10)

Solve addition and subtraction word problems, and add and subtract within 10, e.g., by using objects or drawings to represent the problem.

Use numbers, up to 10, to place objects in order, such as first, second, and third, and to name them

For any number from 1 to 9, find the number that makes 10 when added to the given number, e.g., by using objects or drawings, and record the answer with a drawing or equation.

Math Card Games

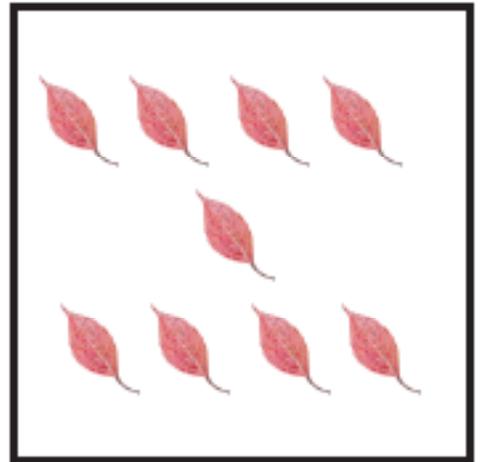
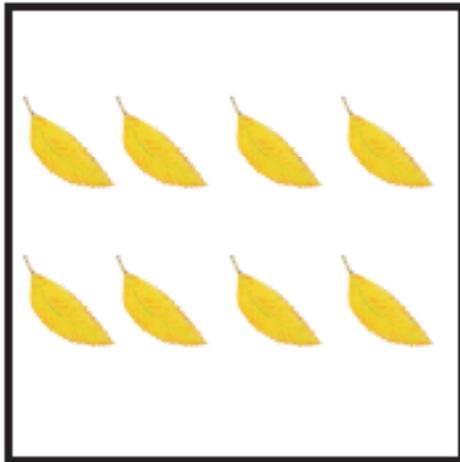
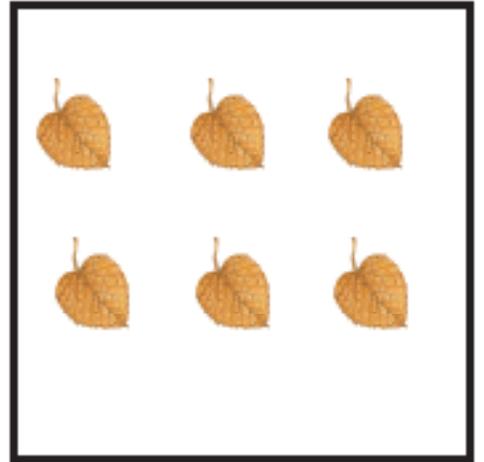
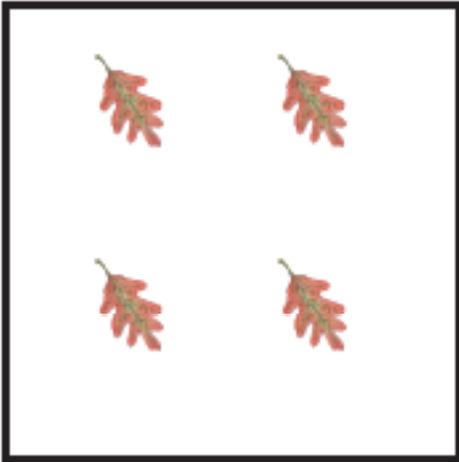
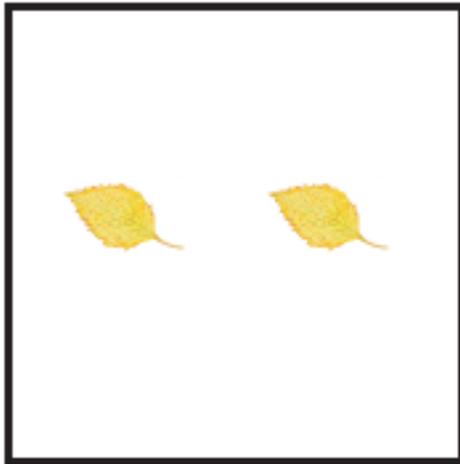
(Make four copies of the math cards to play these games):

Tens Make Friends Memory Game is a combination of a memory and adding game.

- Play like the memory game, above.
- If the animal numbers add up to 10, the child keeps the pair and takes another turn.
- If they do not add up to ten, the player should turn the cards back over and it is another player's turn.

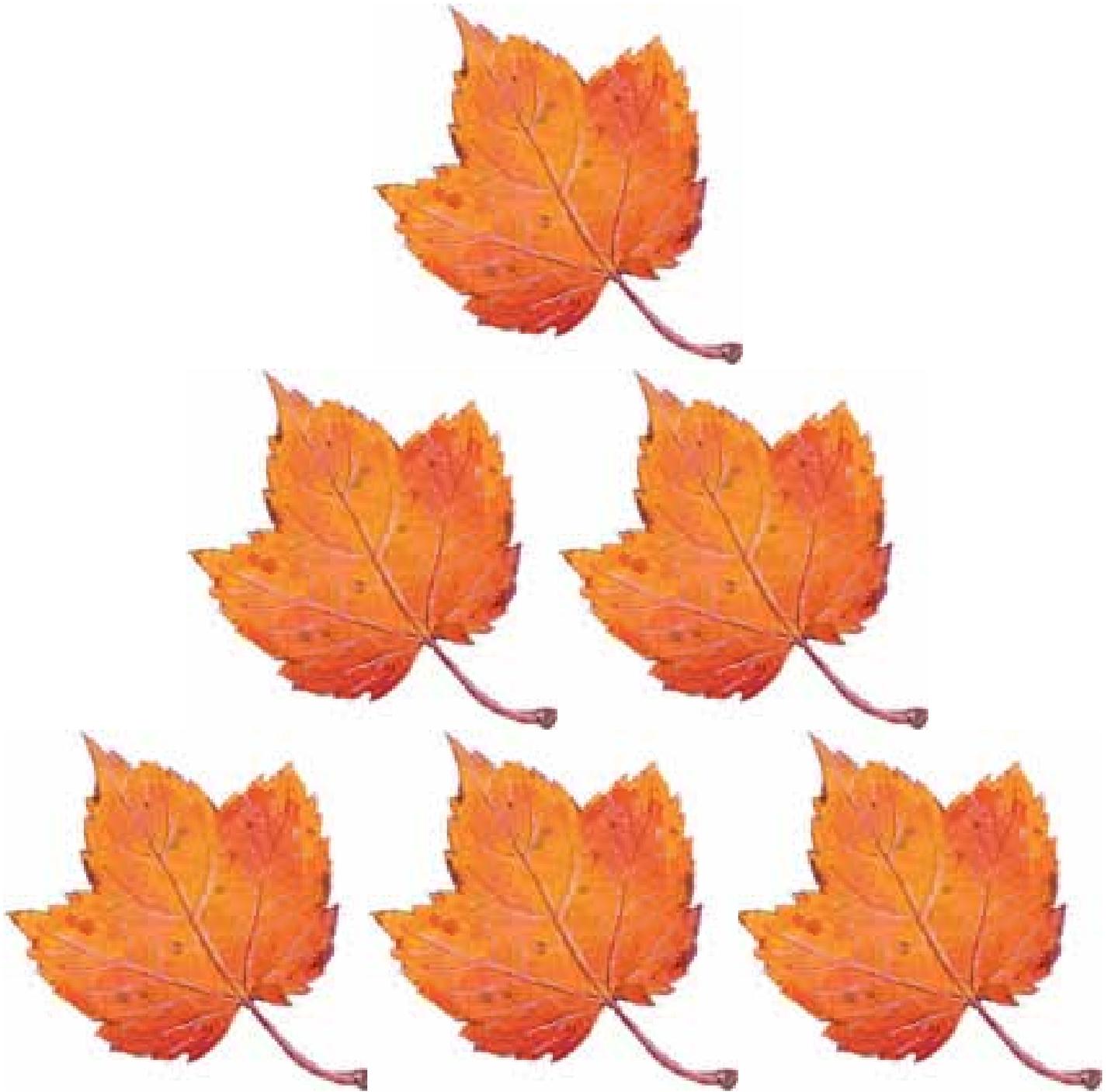
Go Fish for Fact Families is a twist on "Go Fish."

- Shuffle cards and deal five cards to each player. Put the remaining cards face down in a draw pile.
- If the player has three cards that make a fact family, he/she places them on the table and recites the four facts related to the family. For example, if someone has a 2, 3, and 5, the facts are: $2 + 3 = 5$, $3 + 2 = 5$, $5 - 2 = 3$, $5 - 3 = 2$.
- The player then asks another player for a specific card rank. For example: "Sue, please give me a 6."
- If the other player has the requested card, she must give the person her card.
- If the person asked doesn't have that card, he/she says, "Go fish."
- The player then draws the top card from the draw pile.
- If he/she happens to draw the requested card, he/she shows it to the other players and can put the fact family on the table. Otherwise, play goes to the next person.
- Play continues until either someone has no cards left in his/her hand or the draw pile runs out. The winner is the player who then has the most sets of fact families.



How many maple leaf points are there?

If there are three points on each leaf, how many are there all together?



Tree Geography Map Activity

Objective: reading maps, geography, know that plants and animals live in different locations

Maps from: <http://esp.cr.usgs.gov/data/atlas/little/>
or <http://plants.usda.gov/>

Just like there are different types of cats and dogs (yellow or black Labradors), there are different types of trees (sugar or red maple). Use the maps on the following pages to see which trees grow near where you live or not.

Quaking Aspen



Birch



Maple

Big Leaf Maple
Acer macrophyllum



Boxelder or Ash Maple
Acer negundo



Black Maple
Acer barbatum



Spotted Maple
Acer spicatum



Red Maple
Acer rubrum



Rocky Mountain Maple
Acer glabrum



Sugar Maple
Acer saccharum



Oak

Red Oak
Quercus macrocarpa



Crook-White Oak
Quercus garryana



Post Oak
Quercus stellata



White Oak
Quercus alba



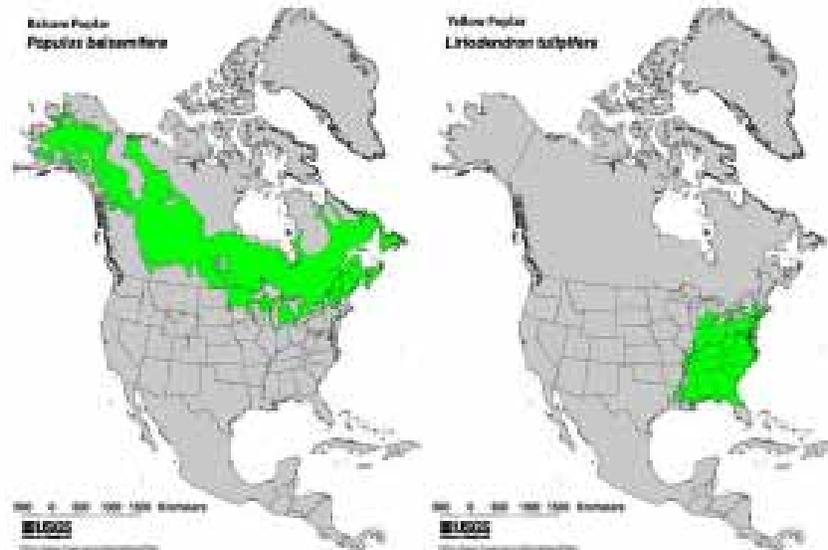
Scarlet Oak
Quercus garbinifolia



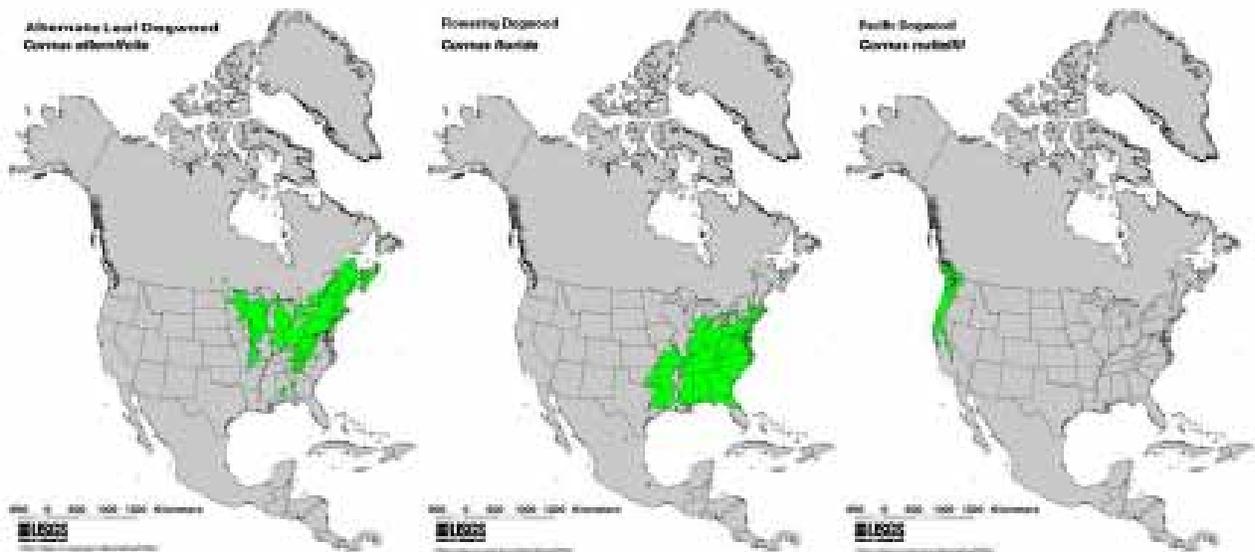
Pine



Poplar



Dogwood



Sweet Gum



American Chestnut



Linden or Basswood (Lime in the UK)



Coloring Pages







Bleed

Sweet Gum

tree
frog

Fall

22

Bleed

Answers

Silly Sentences

Stems carry water and nutrients from the roots to the leaves.

Seeds are found in flowers, fruits, or nuts.

Roots are usually underground and absorb water and nutrients for the plant to grow.

Leaves make food for the plant to grow.

In the fall, leaves may be green, brown, red, orange, yellow or purple.

We eat syrup from maple trees.

Deer eat birch leaves.

Squirrels and other animals eat the seeds in pinecones.

We use the wood from pine and oak trees to build things.

Beavers cut down trees with their teeth to build their houses.

Word Search

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	D	O		C	P	U	R	P	L	E
2	O			H	B	I	R	C	H	
3	G	B	E	E	C	H	D	O	G	
4	W			S			M			
5	O			T	L	E	A	V	E	S
6	O	R	A	N	G	E	P	O	W	L
7	D		S	U	R		L	A		
8			P	T	E		E	K		
9			E	R	E	D				
10	P	I	N	E	N	F	R	O	G	

6,C ASPEN

3,B BEECH

2,E BIRCH

1,D CHESTNUT

1,A DOGWOOD

6,H OWL

4,G MAPLE

6,H OAK

10,A PINE

5,E LEAVES

6,E GREEN

9,D RED

6,A ORANGE

3,G DOG

10,F FROG

What comes from trees

Everything on the list comes from or can be made from part of a tree.

Appendix B—Venn Diagram

Compare and contrast two types of leaves

