



# TREE TRAILS

# 3

★ ELEMENTARY ★

## ★ TREE MEASUREMENT ★

Tree measurement is fundamental to the practice of forestry. Foresters count trees and measure trees. With just a few basic measurements, we can assign values to trees and compare them to each other.

### Goal and Objectives

**Goal:** Students will measure trees and explain how measurement is used to place value on trees and forests.

**Objectives:** Students will

1. Apply the tree measurement process to measure a tree.
2. Explain why tree measurement is important for knowing about a tree's health and value.
3. Determine the measurements and condition of their trail tree and enter on the Tree Trails website.
4. Explain the purposes of the Big Tree Registry.
5. Evaluate their *Tree Measurement* experience.

### Materials

#### General

- Tablet(s) or computer(s) with internet access
- Projector and screen
- Whiteboard or chart paper and markers
- Tree Trails Portfolio, Student Learning Log/Journal

#### Handouts

- Tree Measurement Guidelines
- Tree Trails Data Sheet

#### Activity Materials

- A variety of measuring tools: rulers, tape measures, scales, cups, spoons, yarn, etc.
- Tree measurement tools: 12" ruler, flexible tape measure
- (Optional) Chart paper and markers for small groups
- (Optional) Cameras or camera phones

### Time and Internet Links

Preparation Time: 2 hours

Instructional Time: 2-3 sessions, 45 minutes each

- Big Tree Registry  
<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/texasbigtreeregistry>
- Instructional Strategies  
<http://schools.spsd.sk.ca/curriculum/instructionalstrategies/>
- Tree Trails  
[www.treetrails.org](http://www.treetrails.org)



## I. Engage/Excite

- A. Large Group Discussion: Exhibit a variety of measurement instruments such as rulers, yard sticks, tape measures, measuring spoons and cups, liquid containers, yarn, scales, etc. Ask students to name various professions that might use these and other measurement tools. For example, their parents, relatives, friends and/or neighbors may use these for work to build homes, design clothes, operate a restaurant, etc. List the professions and their tools.
- B. Large Group Discussion continued: Lead a discussion about standard units of measure. Point out that not all of the display measuring instruments have the same measurement standard such as rulers (standard & metric), cups and spoons (ounces, teaspoon), etc. Lead students to generalize that each measurement instrument is designed for a certain task. Generate a conversation about what it would be like if people use a non-standard tool for their work. Example: what if one house builder used a tree limb to measure his lumber needs and another builder used cardboard. Record students' responses on the list created.

*Teacher Tip: You may want to share with students how people once used their bodies (hand and/or arm spans, body height) to measure such things as horse height in terms of hands. Students may have heard that horses may be measured by hand span.*

- C. (Optional) Small Group Activity: In small groups of three, have students choose a profession from the list or choose another not listed. Tell them to keep their profession a secret to present later. Have the "secretary" record on a small chart or paper the Profession, Measurement Tools and Reason. Have each group act out their profession by "pretending" to use the measurement tools required by a specific profession. Have the other groups guess the profession, the measurement tools and the reason. Allow the "pretend" group to reveal their Profession, Tools and Reason chart after at least three guesses are made. Continue until all groups have presented.
- D. Large Group Activity: Begin a KWL chart and allow students to tell "What they think they Know" about measuring a tree. List their responses. Next ask why they think it is important to know how to measure trees. List their responses.
- E. (Optional) Individual Activity: Have students take the *Tree Measurement* pretest.

*Teacher Tip: Explain that the test is only to make sure the learning activities are appropriate and not something they already know. The pretest will help them know more about what they will be learning.*

*To administer the tests by paper, copy from the teacher lesson module. To administer the test electronically, recreate the test in an online survey program. Free programs allow the creator to see results from a class set.*

## II. Explore

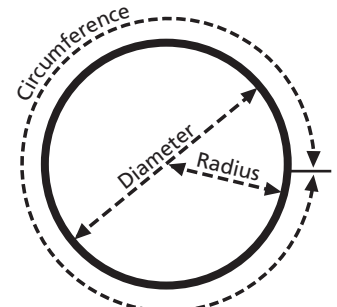
- A. Large Group Discussion: Write "Why Foresters Measure Trees" on a whiteboard/chart and ask why they think foresters measure trees. List their responses. Lead the discussion to focus on how measurement is a first and very important step in determining trees size and value. Explain that foresters record a tree's measurements and its condition over time. The tree's condition and rate of growth are indicators of the tree's response to its environment, and are key factors that



## II. Explore continued

foresters consider when calculating a tree's value. Foresters measure trees to plan harvesting, make management decisions and calculate timber yield. Include all the reasons on the chart and save for later. Let students know they will learn more about tree health, benefits and value in future modules.

- B. Large Group Discussion continued: Write "How Foresters Measure Trees" on a whiteboard/chart. Inform students that foresters measure trees using a standard process and they will learn to measure their trail trees the way foresters do. They will measure their trail tree's circumference and convert it to diameter. They will measure its crown spread, its height, determine its condition and enter the information on the Tree Trails website. This will be the last step to complete their trail tree online.



- C. Large Group Discussion continued: Discuss the definition of circumference and demonstrate how to measure, record the circumference and convert it to diameter. Demonstrate in the class with circular objects (a column) or with student's body, head, etc.

*Teacher Tip: Circumference is the linear distance around the outside of a closed curve or circular object. The circumference of a circle is the length around it.*

*Teacher Tip: Demonstrate the math vocabulary term, circumference using a cylindrical object. Using the same object, demonstrate the term, diameter and describe how the two measurements are related by the constant, pi.*

$$\frac{\text{Circumference}}{3.1415} = \text{Diameter}$$

- D. Complete the "Want to Know" section of the KWL chart.

## III. Explain

- A. Large Group Discussion: Have students follow a projection of the Tree Measurement Guidelines and explain the process of how trees are measured.

*Teacher Tip: You will probably want to practice measuring a tree, circumference, diameter, height and crown spread, before presenting the guidelines to students.*

*Teacher Tip: You may provide students with a handout of the measurement guidelines and have them watch as you also project the guidelines or you may want to have them follow with their tablets/laptops. The guidelines handout is in the resources section of the Tree Trails website.*

*Teacher Tip: Foresters round down in tree measurements instead of rounding up, because the tree has not yet reached the higher measurement. They keep to whole numbers because of the relative accuracy of repeatability – roughed up bark and even relative humidity can make small differences, as can having the tape measure less than perfectly perpendicular to the centerline of the trunk.*



### III. Explain continued

- B. Small Group Activity: After presenting the measurement guidelines, move students into their Tree Trail groups and ask students to consider which measurement technique they might use for their trail tree (general, leaning, multi-branch, etc.).
- C. Individual Activity: Have each student retrieve their Tree Trails Data Sheet from their Portfolio. Instruct them to locate the Circumference and Diameter box, Crown Spread, Height, and Condition Rating boxes. Inform the students that this is where they record their tree's measurements in either inches or feet and condition. Optional: use metric measurement and convert to US Standard Units.
- D. Small Group Activity: Provide each group with measurement tools. Take the students outside to locate their tree. Have each group measure their trail tree: determine where to measure the circumference (see the Tree Measurement Guidelines reference handout), then measure the circumference, measure the crown spread, its height and determine its condition using their best judgement. Record the information on their Tree Trails Data Sheet. Have students return to the classroom.
- E. Small Group Activity continued: Have the group use the formula for diameter and calculate the diameter of their tree. Record the information on the Tree Trails Data Sheet.
- F. Small Group Activity continued: Project the Tree Trails online application and demonstrate how to enter the tree measurements. Provide the small groups with a laptop/tablet and have them follow along as each step is demonstrated. Choose Search By, choose Trail Name, then type the class trail name in the search box. Once they see the trail onscreen, find their tree according to the order of their tree in the trail and select it. Then, for each measurement box, ask another person from the group to contribute their measurement and enter it on the website. Ask another student to provide the condition, Good, Fair, or Poor, and choose it in the appropriate drop down box. Continue until all information is entered. At any time, you may close to save and go back to a tree you have saved and edit it.

### IV. Extend/Elaborate

- A. Large Group Discussion: Tell students about a related site that uses measurement to register Big and Champion Trees. Project the Big Tree Registry website. Ask students to locate the purposes of the program and invite three students to read one of the three purposes.
- B. Small Group Activity: Move students into their Tree Trail groups and go online to the Big Tree Registry website and then open How to Measure a Big Tree. Ask each group to compare their measurement techniques with those used for Big Trees. Let each group report their findings.
- C. Small Group Activity continued: Next ask students to select the Registry of Champion Trees - Native and Naturalized species. They will notice that the trees are registered by common and scientific (Latin) names. Remind students how these names were important to identification of their tree. Now ask students to locate a Big Tree of the same species as their trail tree. Ask each group to report their findings: where the tree is located (county), what is the circumference, height, and when was it last measured.
- D. (Optional) Small Group Activity: Students might want to review some of the virtual tours with a volunteer who hunts for and measures champion trees found on the Big Tree Registry website.



## V. Evaluate

- A. Individual Activity: Ask students to write: 1) List the steps they took to measure their tree, 2) Tell how they determined it's condition, 3) Tell why measurement is important to knowing about the tree's value, 4) Tell a purpose for registering Big Trees.
- B. Small Group Activity: Ask students to share their lists in Think, Pair, Share groups. After sharing, students may want to enter more information in their writing. Have them label their work as Module Three and keep their work in their Portfolios.
- C. (Optional) Individual Activity: Have students take the *Tree Measurement* posttest. Have them compare their results to self-evaluate what they learned and what they did not know.  
*Teacher Tip: You may use the results to determine the need for Extra Mileage/Attention.*
- D. Large Group: Ask student to contribute to the KWL chart and record on whiteboard or class chart to complete with "What we *Learned*."

## VI. Extra Mileage/Attention

**Extra Mileage:** Have students work in pairs to write a mathematical word problem related to two or three dimensions of their trail tree and give to another pair to solve. Ask student pairs to analyze how they answered the problem, what helped and what deterred them from getting the answer.

**Extra Attention:** Appoint peer students to accompany students while they take measurements of their trees with their hands and/or arms and let these students present their new measurements in terms of hand span and arm span measurements.

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# Student Assessment / Pretest and Posttest

## Tree Measurement

Directions: Answer the following questions by rating your response 1-5, with 5 being the highest.

Key: 1 = Not Sure    2 = Poor    3 = OK    4 = Good    5 = Great

- |    |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I can measure my trail tree the forester's way.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | I know how to determine which technique to use to measure my trail tree.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | I can determine the condition of a trail tree.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I know how big trees are measured.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | I can name three reasons why foresters measure trees.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | I can locate a Champion Tree in Texas.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | I know how tree measurement data is entered on the Tree Trail website.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Measuring trees is an important step in conserving our forests.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | I am interested in knowing more about what I can do to keep my trail tree in the best condition. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

