



### LESSON SUMMARY

Students will learn about the history of Sherwood Forest and discover the stories behind significant local trees.



TD Friends of the  
Environment  
Foundation



## Activity Information

<b>Grades:</b>	1-3
<b>Estimated duration:</b>	1 hour
<b>Materials:</b>	Chart paper, markers
<b>Setting:</b>	Indoors and Outdoors
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	Heritage tree, history, stories, forest

## Learning Goals

By the end of the lesson students will:

- Understand some of the characteristics that make trees significant
- Undertake research to learn more about local trees

## Curriculum Connections

### Grades 1-3: Language

**Writing** – This lesson touches on the Writing strand of the language curriculum for grades 1 through 3.

### Grade 1: Social Studies

**People and Environments** – This lesson touches on the Local Community strand of the social studies curriculum for grade 1.

## Background

In the medieval mind, a forest was something different. A Forest was a legal term and an area subject to 'Forest Law' - a law protecting venison (deer) for the King, and the trees and vegetation for the deer habitat. (<http://sherwoodforesthistorystory.blogspot.ca/p/introduction.html>)

By law, it was illegal to hunt deer or chop down trees within a royal forest. Foresters and wardens patrolled the forest on horseback to enforce the regulations. A forest was not wild but was a productive resource that was actively managed.

Robin **Do you know what forest this is?**

Marion **This is Sherwood forest.**

Robin **Wrong. This is my forest.**

Marion **A forest is owned by no man.**

Robin **Not true, Marion. King and lords make forest laws to stake their claim over oak and deer. Now I have staked mine. This is my land. And you're on it.**

The Sherwood Forest is famously known for its link to the legendary tale of Robin Hood, who was forced to live beyond the law in the depths of the forest. He is said to have defied law while living in the forest by hunting the deer that were to be protected for the king.

The Sherwood Forest, home to the Major Oak, is located just south of Sheffield in England. The Major Oak, named for a local historian Major Hayman Rooke, is said to be between 800-1,000 years old. The Major Oak is a **Quercus robur**, or an English oak. English oak can be found in various urbanized areas throughout eastern Canada, but is not native. It is most suitable for parks because of its need for full sun and regular watering. English oak make ideal shade trees.

Today the Major Oak is of national importance and several conservation measures have been carried out to support its branches and protect its trunk.

### Heritage Tree Program

Trees, like works of art, stories or historic buildings, can also be part of a shared cultural, spiritual and natural heritage. In some cases, trees may form a sense of identity for groups and individuals. Heritage trees are an important component of urban forestry. The Heritage Tree Program identifies and records the location of heritage trees across the province of Ontario. The specimen may be notable because of its size, form, shape, beauty, age, colour, rarity, genetic constitution or other distinctive features. It may also be a prominent community landmark or a specimen associated with a historic person, place, event or period. It may also be a tree associated with local folklore, myths, legends or traditions. By this definition, the Major Oak would qualify to be a Heritage Tree if it was located in Ontario. For more information about Heritage Trees, visit [www.forestsontario.ca](http://www.forestsontario.ca)

## ACTIVITY 1

Have a discussion as a group around what a “forest” means to students. Using a board or flip chart paper, ask students to use one word to describe what a forest means to them. Then introduce students to the concept of what a forest meant in medieval England and its role for the King. Are forests valued the same now and then?

1. Ask each student to think about a tree that is important to them or their family.
2. Ask them to write an article about the importance of their tree.
3. Get each student to present their “Heritage Tree” to the class. While students are presenting, write down some of the reasons this tree is significant to that student. Review the list of significant reasons at the end of class.

## ACTIVITY 2

1. In assigned groups have your students choose a tree on or around your school to be nominated for the Heritage Tree program.
2. Ask students to prepare an argument for why their tree is most deserving of the Heritage Tree designation. Have them present this argument to the class.
3. Have the class vote on which of the selected trees should be nominated for the Heritage Tree program. Have your students help you complete the nomination form found on the Forests Ontario website.
4. As a class, select awards that would be presented to each nominated tree.

\*Note that the Heritage Tree program requires an evaluator to validate the nomination. While you can enter your tree for Heritage Tree designation, it may not qualify.

## EXTENSION

1. Ask students to research some of the oldest trees in Ontario. Where are they located? What types of species are they?
2. The Major Oak is considered to be an Ancient Tree (or Veteran tree). What is an Ancient Tree? What are some ways in which these trees are conserved? Have your students brainstorm ways in which we can help to protect important trees. This is a great opportunity to take your class outdoors to explore local trees, and ways in which they may need protection.