

# Students Study Dead Trees

## Suggested Comprehension Strategies

### Vocabulary:

- |                |              |   |
|----------------|--------------|---|
| • Paragraph 7  | “prey”       | Context Clues                             |
| • Paragraph 8  | “limbs”      | Dictionary Entry/Affixes, Best Definition |
| • Paragraph 12 | “fertilizer” | Context Clues, Dictionary Entry/Affixes   |
| • Paragraph 14 | “decomposed” | Context Clues, Dictionary Entry/Affixes   |

### Inferences

#### Predictions

- Read the first and last paragraphs and make predictions about what you will learn as you read.

#### Drawing Conclusions

Use the questions below to draw conclusions.

- Why did Mrs. Jones ask the students to read and/or talk to someone about dead trees before they discussed the topic?
- Why did the teacher use the recorder?
- Why was going to the park an important part of the study?

### Fact and Opinion:

- Locate and discuss facts about dead trees.

### Setting:

- Discuss why the settings of the classroom and park are important.

### Order of Important Events:

- List the events in the story in sequence.

## **Connect, Compare, Contrast Across Text(s):**

- Use a Venn diagram to compare what the students learned in the classroom and at the park.

## **Author's Point of View**

- Discuss the author's point of view about dead trees.

## **Genre Format:**

- Discuss the newsletter format used in the article.
- Locate and discuss the features of the newsletter. Include: the title of newsletter, title of the article, author, date of publication, volume, etc.

## **Comparing Story Variants: (One Story)**

- Compare the settings in the article.
- Compare the characters in the article.

# NEWSLETTER FROM CENTRAL SCIENCE CENTER

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## CLASSROOM NEWS SECTION

### STUDENTS STUDY DEAD TREES

By: Geraldine Haggard

1 The students in Mrs. Jones's class wrote reports about forest birds and other animals. The students read their reports to their class.

2 Mrs. Jones asked a question, "Do birds and other animals have anything in common?"

3 Billy Smith raised his hand. "I noticed that several of the birds and other animals live in dead trees. Do all forests have dead trees? Don't dead trees need to be removed?"

4 "You have raised a great question, Billy. I would like for each of you to find one fact about dead trees. Read or talk to someone about dead trees. On Monday I will ask you what you learned," answered Mrs. Jones.

5 During science class on Monday, the students were ready to share. Mrs. Jones used a recorder to tape their discussion.

6 Louise Brown said, "I found a web site that talked about how birds like to eat the bugs that live in dead trees. Woodpeckers like to drill holes in the trees. They eat the beetles and other bugs they find."

David Gray added, "After the woodpeckers drill the holes, they make the holes bigger.

They live inside the tree. My mother said that birds that hunt small animals like to live in dead trees. The birds can see their prey because there are no leaves. Owls and hawks do this."

Peggy Smith said that the woodpeckers often move their homes. When they leave their old homes, squirrels, raccoons, or opossums move in. "Limbs that fall from the dead trees make piles on the ground. Skunks, lizards, and some birds that like to eat insects move into these piles. They then have all the bugs they want to eat. "

Tim Johnson said, "I found a story about some rabbits that lived in a dead, fallen tree. They don't eat insects, but they like their home."

Jose Mantez said that his granddad took him fishing over the weekend. "We saw dead trees that were close to the edge of the lake. My granddad told me that baby fish live under these trees. He said that these fallen trees are a good place to fish. We each caught a fish."

Mrs. Jones was pleased that the students had learned about the use of dead trees as homes for birds, insects, and fish. "Does anyone know another way the dead trees help?" she asked. John Lang raised his hand. "I read that the dead trees rot and become a part of the soil. My dad told me that these trees act as fertilizer. The baby trees and other plants in the forest will then have good food."

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Mrs. Jones explained that she had a surprise. The next day was Tuesday. They would go across the street to a park. "I noticed that there are some dead trees in the park," she said. "Each of you will bring a small bag to school. You can put things in the bag that you collect."

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An excited class visited the park the next day. They stood around a dead tree. They talked about what they saw. They put small amounts of soil in their hands. They could feel the decomposed parts of the tree.

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One dead tree had moss and toadstools growing under it. Mrs. Jones explained that the fungi that grow around dead trees also give food to the soil.

Each student came back to class with things to study. They had soil and pieces of bark from dead trees. Some had fungi, like mold and toadstools. Mrs. Jones asked them to think of questions that they would like to ask on Wednesday. There was still a lot to learn about the life in and around dead trees.

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