

'The Last Tree'

Practical 2D art and literacy

Activity suitable for KS1- 3

Using Emily Howarth-Booth's illustrated book 'The Last Tree' as a starting point, this resource develops practical observational drawing skills, along with story telling and ideas to deepen connections with trees and environmental issues.

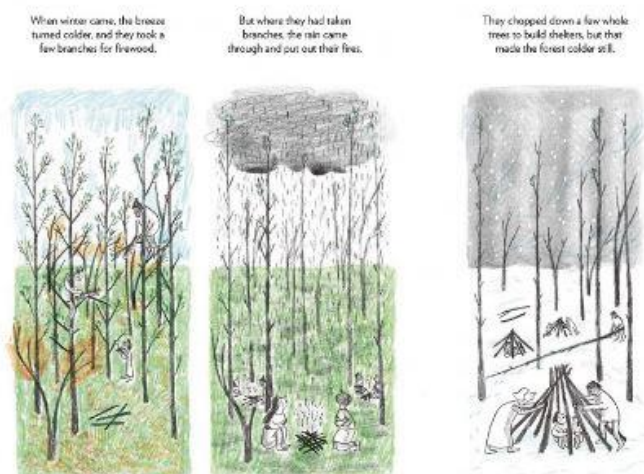


Pupils will:

- develop practical skills and confidence in observational drawing
- develop confidence and skills in using charcoal to create tone, texture, shapes and lines
- deepen their engagement with nature through Art and Design
- develop literacy, story-telling and discussion skills
- understand how illustrations work to support narrative stories.

Watch our short film about Great Wood for help with planning. It includes a virtual tour of the woodland and an introduction to 'The Last Tree'. It also shows examples of making charcoal drawings of trees and ideas for responding to 'The Last Tree'.

Curriculum Links: English, History, Geography, Environmental Science, Physical Education, Well-being



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Emily Haworth-Booth's illustrative style is energetic. Her pencil line has a scrawly, scratchy quality, which is comforting for children to emulate. The comic-style layout links the narrative of the story with the illustrations. Sharing and discussing the story text alongside analysing Emily's artwork, helps to link areas of learning in art, literacy, natural science, and environmental awareness.

Task – read 'The Last Tree' Emily by Howarth-Booth. Explore and discuss the story and how the illustrations and words work together to help communicate the very important message. This activity works well after making a nature journal and spending time lying on the ground looking up at trees (see resource 'Five Senses'). Encourage children to research and write their own illustrated stories about a tree with an environmental message.

Task – let's learn about charcoal – how it is made:



A charcoal burning day at Fyne Court, Broomfield, on the Quantock Hills of Somerset.

Charcoal burning is a traditional Somerset country craft, which has recently been revived by the National Trust on the Quantocks.

"The sessile oak woodlands are designated a Special Area of Conservation at European Level; they are also protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest making them a valuable resource. These ancient woodlands were coppiced for centuries prior to the 20th century for charcoal making and tanning, a process where the trees were cut to ground level and then allowed to grow back. They can be identified by the acorn which sits directly on the branch, and due to the poor quality of soil on the hillsides have twisted trunks, adding to the atmosphere of the woodlands." - <https://www.quantockhills.com/combe>

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Find out more about how charcoal is still made today and even have a go at making some yourself with this handy resource from Hestercombe:

<https://www.hestercombe.com/how-we-make-charcoal/>

Task - Using Charcoal

Materials and Approaches

PAPER

Any paper will do but heavier paper will stand more eraser use.

CHARCOAL

Willow Charcoal is easier to use than pencil. Without pressing hard, It makes a dark line and an eraser can pull up most of the charcoal with little effort. Your pupils will also love how messy it is.

ERASER

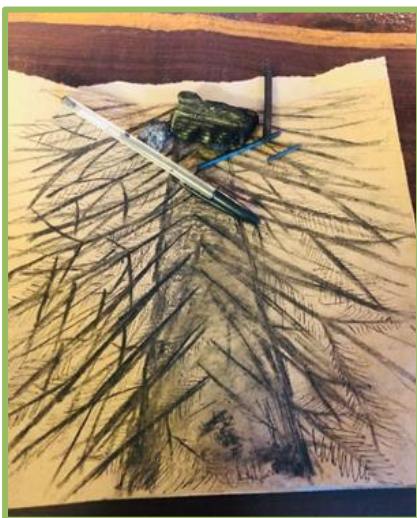
This is necessary. The pupils will want to make changes so they will need a rubber. A kneaded or putty rubber is useful as they can pull it and stretch, so the rubber comes new and clean. Small pieces of rubbers can make great mark making.

BIRO PEN

Easy pen to add finer detail on top of the charcoal. Especially useful when adding finer branches and texture onto the tree images.

Task – make tree drawings using charcoal and biro

Observational drawing, especially outside is fun. Looking for pattern in the dense woods or drawing a single tree in the playing field or garden can be just a couple of ways to start drawing with children.



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Watch the Great Wood video to see examples and learn tips about making charcoal drawings of trees.

- VIEWPOINT** Take some time to help the pupils to choose the tree/s they want to draw. Encourage them to sit and look. Looking up at the tall trees can help the students to see patterns and branches. Or encourage them to choose their favourite tree.
- BLOCKING** Draw simple large shapes. Draw the trunk and the basic large branches. Get a good overall shape and overall right size of each shape, in relation to another.
- DETAILS** Now ask them to look carefully. Get them to draw as much as they can see. Branches, bark, tree knots, leaves (or not depending upon the season.) The biro pen will help will adding the finer lines.
- SHADING** Shading will allow the drawing to look three dimensional. If pupils are nervous about adding tone tell them just to add shade to the tree trunk and main branches.
- CLEAN UP** Charcoal gets messy so cleaning up with a rubber can help to get rid of the smudges. Cleaning up the background can make the drawing pop out of the page.

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