



# TREE TRAILS

8

★ ELEMENTARY ★

## ★ TREE HISTORY ★

Trees fascinate us because the oldest among them span many human generations. Trees can be a living link to our past, or may be planted by the current generation as memorials to important events or people in the community.

### Goal and Objectives

**Goal:** Students will research the history of a tree(s) and make connections to the past.

**Objectives:** Students will

1. Investigate a specific Famous tree(s) and its past.
2. Describe reasons historians developed a Famous Tree book and website.
3. Summarize important events leading to the establishment of Texas A&M Forest Service.
4. Connect a tree's historic life span to ties with people and events.
5. Create and present a timeline of the tree's history that depicts significant events from its beginning to the present.
6. Evaluate their experience during the *Tree History* Module.

### Materials

#### General

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

#### Activity Materials

- Butcher paper or copy paper and markers

### Time and Internet Links

Preparation Time: 2 hours

Instructional Time: 2-3 sessions, 45 minutes each

- Famous Trees of Texas  
<http://famoustreesoftexas.tamu.edu>
- Texas History  
<http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/texas>  
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online>
- How to Create a Timeline in Microsoft Office  
<http://goo.gl/XsUGYj>
- Tree Trails  
[www.treetrails.org](http://www.treetrails.org)



# Instructional Procedures

## I. Engage/Excite

- A. Large Group Discussion: Ask students to imagine their trail tree can talk. Ask what would it say about its history? Ask students to pretend they are interviewing their tree. Ask: "What is your name? Where were you born? Who were your friends when you were a baby? Have you lived in more than one place? If so, where? What were some events that happened while you were growing up? What has happened at the school since you have been here? Do you think you will become famous?"
- B. Small Group Activity: Move students into their small Tree Trail groups and have them share their answers and write the answers to the questions (some or all) to keep in their Portfolios and/or Learning Logs.
- C. Large Group Discussion continued: Have each group share with the class their Learning Log/Portfolio entries. Ask students if they are curious about their tree's relatives. Tell them there is a website to learn about famous trees like their tree and they will go online to find if any trail tree relatives are famous and if so, why.
- D. (Optional) Individual Activity: Have the students take the *Tree History* 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: Explain that the purpose of this module is to develop an appreciation for ways in which trees connect to our history. Tell students before they go online to learn about their trail tree, they will have some fun answering some questions about some of the Famous Trees. Project this website for all students to see. Ask students to look at the "Famous Facts" at the top middle of the page. Ask one student to read the first question and let the others guess the answer. They may record their answers in their Learning Logs/Portfolio. Select the question and let students read the answer and the information about the tree. Ask one or two students to summarize.
- B. Small Group Activity: Provide laptops/tablets to students and assign the other five questions on the "Famous Facts" page to five groups. Have them find the answers and provide a brief synopsis about them. Each group may appoint one or more students from their group to talk about the question and the answers to the class.

## III. Explain

- A. Small Group Activity: Keep the students in the small groups and ask everyone to listen to find out why people thought it was important to develop a book and a website about Famous Trees. Ask



### III. Explain continued

students to stay online and select "About Us" and then on the "Preface." Have all students read to find the answers and discuss their findings in the small groups. Ask each group to report the information they found. Record their summaries on a Why Trees Are Important Historical Landmarks chart/whiteboard.

*Teacher Tip: Lead the students to conclude that the purpose of the Famous Trees of Texas website is "to memorialize those trees which have been a witness to some of the exciting periods and events in Texas' frontier history." Let students know that because trees present a link to the past, they are often used to link past events or important people to our lives and/or community.*

- B. Large Group Discussion: Lead a discussion about how historical events are presented to make them easier to understand. Writers often use graphics and other visuals to assist them to create a story of time in our mind. Ask students what kind of visuals might help them tell a tree history story. Guide them to select a timeline as a method (As deemed appropriate, demonstrate a timeline of a person in the class.) Inform the students that they can create a historical timeline to connect their trail tree to a Famous Tree, important events/people of its life span, themselves and/or important events/people of their community, school, etc.
- C. Small Group Activities: Move students into their Tree Trail groups and go outside to sketch an outline of their tree to put on the timeline. They will want to keep the outline to make a marker for their tree in another module.
- D. Small Group Activity: Have the Tree Trail groups return to the classroom find a famous tree of the same species as their trail tree. on the Famous Trees of Texas website. They should select Explore Our Trees, then Species, find the species that is the same as their trail tree and select it. Then, they should read the information about the tree. Tell them they will develop a summary about the Famous Tree for the timeline. Each group may appoint a recorder to write the summary. They may use this format:
  - 1. Name of Tree Trail Group
  - 2. Famous Tree common name and scientific name
  - 3. Historical period that begins their timeline
  - 4. Historical topic of the period
  - 5. County were the tree is located
  - 6. Is the tree accessible - yes or no (indicates if the tree is or is not able to be visited)
  - 7. Summary of why the tree is famous (three or more phrases)

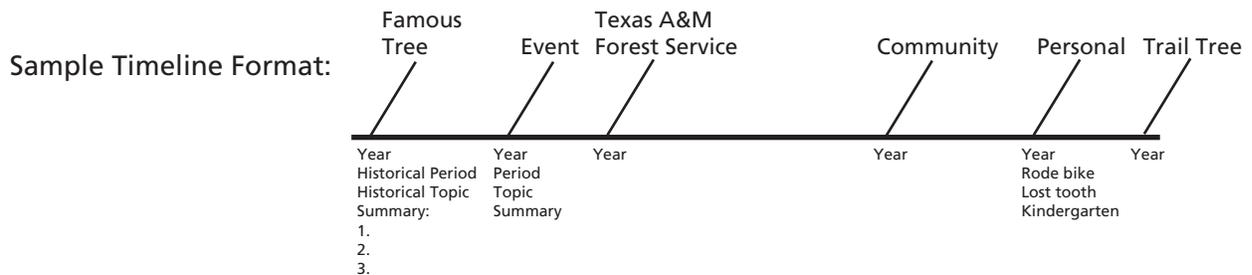
*Teacher Tip: Options: a.) If students find the same species of Famous Tree as their tree, the students may adopt the Famous Tree. If there are several trees of the same species they may choose the one they want. b.) If students cannot find the same tree species, they may adopt a Famous Tree of choice but still include their trail tree on the timeline.*

- E. Small Group Activity continued: Next have each Tree Trails group locate, summarize and record the information about their trail tree to use on thir timeline.



## IV. Extend/Elaborate

- A. Large Group Discussion/Small Group Activity: Discuss other information available on the Famous Trees of Texas website. Ask them to select "About Us" and then on "Forestry in Texas." Assign a paragraph or two to each Tree Trails group to read and summarize for the class. Ask students to share in the same sequence as the paragraphs of the text their summaries about why the establishment of the Texas A&M Forest Service was an important event. Record their summaries (events, people and years) on a "Forestry in Texas" summary chart/whiteboard. Keep the summary chart available for students to use on their timeline.
- B. Large Group Demonstration: Demonstrate the format and style to use for the Timeline. One way to develop the Timeline shows dates/years on a horizontal date line, and then list the events above the timeline and the information about the event under the Timeline. Dates/years should be left to right with oldest date on the left. The Famous Tree date begins the timeline and the Trail Tree is at the end. Keep the sample available for students to reference as they work on their Timeline.



- C. Large Group Discussion continued: Discuss where the information is on the sample Timeline, how it is ordered and the categories presented. Point to the categories as these are explained. These categories of information are:
1. Famous Tree history (each group has their Famous tree information)
  2. Texas A&M Forest Service history (all students use the same information)
  3. (Optional) Texas History People and/or Events
  4. Community History (all groups use the same information)
  5. Personal History (each student in each group includes their unique information)
  6. Trail Tree History (each group uses the information collected for their tree)

### Teacher Tip:

1. *Community: Provide the information about the community or have groups find information such as when: the school was built, the town was established, the city hall was built, the first hospital built, the first or nearest park was developed, etc.*
2. *Personal: Remind students to include their personal information. They may use their Tree Cookies developed in Module Two and/or add other information about themselves, their families and/or their neighborhoods, etc. (Optional) Allow students to take home a list of questions to ask their family for use on the timeline.*
3. *Trail Tree: Information may be the date it was registered on the Tree Trails website, the date it was planted (if available), the date the Class Tree Trail was named, etc.*

#### IV. Extend/Elaborate continued

*(Optional) As desired, students may investigate other Tree Trails in Texas, Famous Trees, Champion Trees, or other trees of specific species (by using the Search By Species feature) on the Tree Trails map application.*

- D. Small Group Activities: Provide the students with the materials: butcher paper roll or copy paper taped together and markers, or have students develop the timeline with PowerPoint. Have students create a draft of their timeline. Check each draft to make sure it includes all the information. Once the drafts are approved, have students develop the final Timeline. Each group should assign a member to present the different sections of the timeline.
- E. Large Group Activity: Have each group present their Timeline and discuss the events, dates, etc. Invite guests as desired and record the presentation as appropriate. Have students display their timelines in the class or on the wall outside the classroom.

#### V. Evaluate

- A. Individual Activity: Ask students to review their timelines and evaluate the accuracy of the dates, the information, and the quality of their work and the clarity of their presentation.
- B. (Optional) Individual Activity: Each group member may rate each category (Famous tree, historical events, Texas A&M Forest Service event, personal events and trail tree information) from 1-5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest and put their evaluation in their Learning Logs/Portfolios.
- C. (Optional) Small Group Activity: Have each group review another timeline and rate it the same way then discuss their evaluation with the other group members.
- D. (Optional) Individual Activity: Have students take the *Tree History* 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.*

#### VI. Extra Mileage/Attention

**Extra Mileage:** Have students create a Famous Tree named after something important in their life or their family's life. Have them illustrate the tree and write about the important event in their Learning Logs/Portfolios.

(Optional) Have students create a challenging question for the Famous Tree Famous Facts for one of the Famous Trees that does not have a question.

**Extra Attention:** Have students' role play how one of the Famous Trees became famous. Have them name the tree in their Learning Logs/Portfolios.

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# Student Assessment / Pretest and Posttest

## Tree History

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

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|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I can name a Famous Tree of Texas.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | I know how to find out about Famous Trees of Texas.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | I can tell why trees are important to our history.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I can name two reasons why Texas A&M Forest Service was established. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | I know how to collect information about trail tree species.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | I can name three important events in my community/school.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | I can name three events that are important events to my family.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | I can develop a timeline of important events in my life.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | I am interested in learning more about why Famous Trees are famous.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

