

Tap The Magic Tree by Christie Matheson

Literature Focus Unit

EDU315

Literature Selection

- **Fiction**

- [The Giving Tree by Harper Collins](#)
- Snow Rabbit, Spring Rabbit: a book of changing seasons by Sung Na
- Curious George by Margret Ray
- The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree by Gail Gibbons
- Skip Through the Seasons by Stella BlackStone
- Chick Pea and the Changing Tree by Linda Cole

- **Nonfiction**

- [Autumn is here by Heidi Pross Gray](#)
- [Summer is here by Heidi Pross Gray](#)
- [Winter is here by Heidi Pross Gray](#)
- [Spring is Here by Heidi Pross Gray](#)
- Changing Seasons by Sian Smith
- The Reasons for Seasons by Gail Gibbons
- [I Can Name 50 Trees Today by Bonnie Worth](#)
- Sharing Seasons: a book of poems by Margaret K. McElderry

Theme Study

- Students will take part in a thematic unit on Tap the Magic Tree and seasons. This unit will integrate reading and writing with social studies, science, mathematics, art, music, and physical education.
- Students will develop an understanding of the changing seasons, different kinds of trees and leaves, identify how seasons affect trees, and how trees help animals and humans.

Language Arts: Reading Activities

- Students will explore various fiction and nonfiction books and poetry about trees and seasons. Students will have silent reading time, story time, where teacher reads to class, and partner reading.
- Students will be broken up into groups and given a season and resources to look through to discover what the season is like. (leaves, paper snowflakes, flowers, paper raindrops, beach sand, picture of hot sun, picture books, etc.)
- Students will participate in a poetry reading session with the teacher. Working on rhyming words and rhythm.
- Students will organize pictures and sight words relating to seasons to create a diagram on the wall showing all the words that describe each season.

Language Arts: Writing Activities

- Spelling corner: Students will help think of theme words, that they want to learn how to spell, collaborating a spelling list as a group. Discussing and practicing as a group with mini marker boards.
- Students will pick from labeled boxes full of different kinds of clothing to properly dress the class teddy bear for the current weather outside. After the bear is dressed the class will all try to spell what the bear is wearing then review as a class the correct way to spell what he is wearing. (rain boots, coat, hat, scarf, sandals, shorts, etc.)
- Practicing proper pencil holding and fine motor skill: students will follow the outline of a snowflake, leaf, flower or sun to cut out and hang in the proper season display around the room.
- Students will practice spelling words and letters they have been learning using shaving cream and their pointer fingers to shape the letters. Students will play copy cat with the teacher using shaving cream on the board creating the same word or letters as the teacher.
- Writing prompts using 6 + 1 writing traits: If I were a tree..., If I were a leaf...
- Tree journal- each students will adopt a tree and observe it through the seasons.

Language Arts: Speaking Activities

- Students will take turns playing Simon Says using the season dress up clothes.
- Students speak with the talking stick about what their favorite season is and why and what their least favorite season is and why.
- Students will announce to the class the weather of the day. Students names will be drawn to do calendar for the day. Wearing the weather man or woman badge they will look out the window and put the correct weather symbols on the calendar for the day.
- Students will participate in a literature discussion circle on the class book *Tap the Magic Tree* by Christie Matheson
- Show and share: their favorite project/ paper about during the unit.

Language Arts: Listening Activities

- Students will listen to the teacher read Tap the Magic Tree.
- Students will listen to songs about different seasons
- Students will listen respectfully to their peers as they read their poems aloud to the class
- Students will listen to the teacher explain the different seasons in North Dakota, emphasizing on our winters.
- Students will listen to audio books individually.
- Students will sit outside on a windy day and write about what they hear.

Language Arts: Viewing Activities

- Students will take a nature walk to view the current season
- Students will view art of a specific season.
- Students will look through Tap the Magic Tree and find new vocabulary words and look up their definitions.
- Students will watch videos of winter storms and rain storms that have struck their home town.

Language Arts: Visually Representing Activities

- Students will create seasonal decorations for each season as they come.
- Winter wonderland- students will create snow flakes, take pictures of snowmen and snow forts made outside, and make winter trees for our classroom
- Autumn pumpkin patch- go to Papa's pumpkin patch, trace leaves, make autumn trees for our room
- Spring flower field- pick flowers from a flower field, press flowers in class nature book, paint favorite flowers, make spring trees for our room
- Summer day at the beach- make our room into a beach with decorations representing summer, create summer tree for our room
- Students will take pictures of the changing seasons to see the effects of weather on nature.
- Students will explore in the sensory table different elements from the different seasons. (snow, leaves, beach sand, flowers and plants with soil)
- Comparing how different crops grow compared to a tree.

Science Activities:

- Make a winter treat of ice cream using ice, salt, and ice cream mix
- Classify our pressed flowers and plants
- Classify leaves: deciduous vs. evergreen
- Measuring and weighing different vegetables from the garden to see similarities and differences.
- Tree journal: Observe and record a tree near the school to see the changes it goes through during each season
- Describing and observing changing colors of leaves, Spring blossoms on trees
- snow and hail research: what is it made of

Math Activities

- Apple fractions- using real apples teacher will demonstrate fractions by cutting the apple
- Read *Apple Fractions* by Jerry Palotta
- Autumn subtraction. The class tree has so many leaves but when fall comes we start subtracting leaves.
- Symmetry Project: Examine and recreate leaves, snowflakes, and flowers with perfect symmetry of both sides. Labeling the angles of the vines in their leaves, petals, and flakes.
- Measure project: using a graph keep track of plants growth.
- Students will graph the weather and temperature for each day.

Social Studies Activities

- Students will compare winters in North Dakota to other winters in the United States
- Students will discuss Lewis and Clark and the type of weather they experienced during their travels in North Dakota
- compare the contrast weather conditions to accompany the four seasons.
- Students will identify what types of trees grow in other parts of our country
- Compare and contrast winter seasons in Africa vs. Alaska. For example: Different people that live there or different plants that grow there
- what countries and states do not receive snow

Music and Art Activities

- Students will make collages of pictures they have taken from different seasons
- Students will create window hangings of leafs, made of tissue paper and construction paper
- Students will learn the song...[The four seasons song](http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=39605&CategoryID=6303)
<http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=39605&CategoryID=6303>
- Students will create new lyrics to a winter song such as “Let it Snow.”
- Students will create their own class magic tree that they can change through out the seasons
- Students will take a field trip to a flower field to take pictures to paint.
- Students will learn and make the noises of tap the magic tree (tap, clap, Shake, plop, knock, brush, wiggle, jiggle, etc.) and make the noises as the teacher reads.
- Students will move to nature music.
- Students will sketch what they visualize while listening to different music>

Physical Education Activities

- Students will make a “snow fort” out of matts and other equipment to have a foam snow ball fight.
- Students will go sledding.
- Students will go on a nature walk in the fall
- Students will rake leaves for a volunteer project.

Technology

- Digital Photography
- Audio books
- <http://www.turtlediary.com/kindergarten-games/science-games/seasons.html>
- <http://www.playkidsgames.com/games/seasons/>
- <http://www.primarygames.com/seasons/seasons.htm>
- [The four seasons song
http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=39605&CategoryID=6303](http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=39605&CategoryID=6303)
- <http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=29578&CategoryID=6303>

Language Arts Strategies

- Active background Knowledge: students will think about what they already know about the four seasons.
- Brainstorm: students will think of many ideas related to the seasons through writing activities.
- Connecting: students will relate their experiences of the seasons and connect what kind of weather goes with what season.
- Predicting and Monitoring: students will predict what the trees will look like as the seasons change and keep track of them through sketching
- Playing with Language: students will use language creatively through reading and writing activities.
- Revising: students will fix their corrected mistakes after writing activities.
- Visualizing: students will use their creativity with the classroom camera to visually represent what they think is beautiful about each season.

Grouping Patterns

- Larger Group:
- Students will take part in large group story time, grand discussions of poetry and seasons.
- Students will help teacher create a spelling list and use shaving cream to practice the new words.
- Students will choose proper clothing for our class bear to dress him for the season.
- The whole class will take part in calendar time, apple fractions, autumn subtraction, fieldtrips, nature walks, and volunteering.
- Students will work together to come up with materials to use to make their own magic tree.

Grouping Patterns

- Small group:
- Students will be broken up into small groups to do season study boxes.
- Students will work in small groups to organize pictures with correct sight words.
- Small groups will each have a copy of Tap the Magic Tree to find and look unfamiliar vocabulary words. Students will partner read together.
- Lab groups will be formed for science experiments and observations.
- Physical Education: students will be on teams and collaborate ideas of how to make their own snow fort and strategies to win the snowball fight.

Grouping Patterns

- Individual
- Students will do independent poetry writing and studying.
- Each student will get to create their own art for the season formations.
- Individual pictures will be taken for their changing season observations.
- Each student will be responsible for their own symmetry projects of leaves, snowflakes, and flowers.
- Every student is an artist and will create individual art projects.

Assessment

- Informal observations of: Sight word activities, vocabulary exploration in Tap the Magic Tree, season study box, partner reading, science experiments, and physical education activities.
- Active participation in: book exploration, spelling corner, season bear dressings, dress up Simon says game, grad discussions, and calendar.
- Portfolio of Art work: winter wonderland, Autumn pumpkin patch, Spring flower field, summer day at the beach, photographs taken during observations, pressed flowers/plants, drawings of real changing tree, symmetry project, season collage, and window hangings.
- Students will be formally assessed of a few things such as spelling tests and practices and written season poems.