All About Christmas Trees
Grades PreK - 2
English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Visual Arts

Objectives
Students will learn about the history of Christmas tree farms and Christmas tree markets. They will create handmade Christmas trees that imitate the geometry found in nature.

Vocabulary
evergreen—having leaves that stay green all year long
farm—a piece of land used for growing crops or raising animals
market—a place where products are bought and sold
woodsman—a person who works in and knows many things about the forest

Background

Evergreen trees and branches have been used as winter celebrations since 700 A.D. These early celebrations were not religious. They observed the Winter Solstice, which has the shortest day and the longest night of the year. The term solstice comes from the Latin word *solstitium* which means sun-standing. The sun had been getting gradually lower in the southern sky and on the solstice, the sun seemed to rise and set in the same place. By December 25th, the sun was visibly higher in the sky and people celebrated the rebirth of the sun. Some of the earliest celebrations focused on agriculture and nature.

Gradually, religious celebrations like Christmas and Hanukkah blended with the observance of the solstice. Because of their association with pagan ceremonies, evergreen trees as a part of Christmas celebrations came much later in history. Historians believe the first tree was decorated for Christmas in Strasbourg Germany in 1539.

German immigrants brought the Christmas tree tradition to the United States. German settlements had community Christmas trees by 1747.

Because people lived in mostly rural, wooded areas, the first Christmas trees in Europe and North America were cut in nearby forests. As more densely populated cities emerged, getting a tree was more of a challenge for city dwellers. Only the wealthy and those with a horse and wagon to transport a tree could go to the forest to cut a tree. In 1851, Mark Carr, a **woodsman** from the Catskill mountains of New York offered a solution. He cut 2 dozen fir and spruce trees, loaded them on wagons and took them to Manhattan. He paid one dollar to set up his trees outside Washington Market. The trees sold out in one day. Other local farmers and woodsmen followed suit the following year and the Christmas Tree **market** was born.

The first Christmas Tree **farm** in the United States was planted in 1901. W.V. McGalliard planted 25,000 Norway spruce trees outside Trenton New Jersey. The trees were sold seven years later for $1.00 each.

Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom is a program of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

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Christmas tree farms located near large urban areas met a need for people living in cities. The convenience of harvesting and transporting trees from one area made the trees easier to market. However, until the 1950's, 90 percent of all natural Christmas trees sold in the United States were still harvested from forests.

In Europe and the United States, environmentalists were afraid that harvesting Christmas trees would lead to deforestation. However, they learned that just the opposite was true. As prime trees were cut in woodlands, smaller seedlings suddenly had access to more sunlight and water. They grew to replace the trees that had been removed. Under ideal growing conditions, it takes five to ten years for a young tree to grow to marketable size. When trees are poorly spaced and have to compete for water, soil nutrients and sunlight, they grow more slowly. "Farmed" Christmas trees not only receive more consistent care than a tree in the forest, they are shaped and pruned as so grow into a desirable cone shape.

Most of the desirable evergreen "Christmas tree" varieties grow best in climates with cool summers. The Eastern Red Cedar is Oklahoma's only native evergreen tree. Thanks to research conducted by OSU's Forestry Department in the 1980's, Christmas tree growers in Oklahoma have another choice. After about ten years of trials a well-adapted variety of Virginia pine was offered to area Christmas tree growers.

Oklahoma has about 20 Christmas tree farms.They are primarily "choose and cut" operations. Customers come to the farm, walk through the trees, pick one out and cut it down. These farms provide saws and some will cut the tree for their customers. Some also offer pre-cut fir and spruce trees shipped from the northern U.S.

Additional Reading

Palmer, Robert W. and Donna L Palmer, *Ben and Molly's Christmas Tree Farm: A Christmas Tree Story*, Self-published, 2018

Purmell, Ann, *Christmas Tree Farm*, Holiday House, 2006.

Ray, Mary Lyn, *Christmas Farm*, Clarion, 2013

Winter, Jeanette, *The Christmas Tree Ship*, Guest Cottage, 2002.

Websites

https://www.okchristmastrees.com/
https://forestry.ok.gov/christmas-trees
https://www.travelok.com/article_page/oklahoma-christmas-trees-light-up-the-holidays
https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas-trees
https://web.extension.illinois.edu/trees/facts.cfm
https://realchristmastrees.org/education/history-of-christmas-trees/
https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/christmas-tree-customs
https://www.christmastreeassociation.org/

Created: 11/2021
2021 ELA Standards

All About Christmas Trees

Activity 1: Christmas Tree History, (English Language Arts)   1 50 minute class period
Students will read about Christmas tree farms and markets and identify important facts about each. They will recognize rhyme in poetry and generate generate additional rhyming words.

Oklahoma Academic Standards
Activity 1: Christmas Tree History (English Language Arts)

PK.2.PA.2	Students will recognize spoken words that rhyme (e.g., wall & fall).
K.2.PA.2	Students will distinguish rhyming and non-rhyming pairs and produce a rhyme when given a word.
K.2.R.4 1.2.R.4	Students will begin to retell facts and details from an informational text.
2.2.R.4	Students will begin to summarize facts and details from an informational text.
1.3.R.6	Students will begin to locate facts that are clearly stated in a text.
2.3.R.6	Students will locate facts that are clearly stated in an informational text.
PK.4.R.3 K..4.R.3	Students will begin to acquire new vocabulary and relate new words to prior knowledge.
1.4.R.5 2.4.R.5	Students will acquire new grade-level vocabulary, relate new words to prior knowledge, and apply vocabulary in new situations.

Materials:
- Activity 1 Worksheet 1 **"Frayer Model"**
- Activity 1 Reading Page 1 **"The Christmas Tree Farm"**
- Activity 1 Worksheet 2 **"Facts About Christmas Tree Farms"**
- Activity 1 Reading Page 2 **"The Christmas Tree Market"**
- Activity 1 Worksheet 3 **"Facts About Christmas Tree Markets"**
- Activity 1 Reading Page 3A **"The Little Pine Tree"**
- Activity 1 Reading Page 3B **"The Little Pine Tree"**

Procedures
1. Discuss background and vocabulary words. Have students work in small groups to complete Activity 1 Worksheet 1 **"Frayer Model"** for one of the vocabulary words. Each group will tell other students the definition, list at least one fact and give an example. For PreK and Kindergarten, choose only one word and go through the steps orally as a class.
2. Have students who are reading fairly well read EITHER Activity 1 Reading Page 1 **"The Christmas Tree Farm"** or Activity 1 Reading Page 2 **"The Christmas Tree Market"**. Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the worksheet that accompanies each reading page.
3. For younger students, read one of the passages aloud or have students follow along as you read. Ask students to orally identify the facts and retell the story.

Continued procedures:

4. Read aloud the poem from Activity 1 Reading Page 3A or 3B **"The Little Pine Tree"**. Older students can read along on one of the sheets
    —Have younger students count the words that rhyme and then call out other words that rhyme with tree.
    —Older students can use 3A or 3B to write rhyming words. Students who need a more guided experience can use 3A to trace and then copy words that rhyme with tree. Students with a good understanding of rhyme can use 3B to generate their own list of rhyming words.

All About Christmas Trees

Activity 1 Worksheet 1: Frayer Model

Name: _____

Date: _____

Definition

Facts or Characteristics

Examples

Non-examples

Name: _____ Date: _____

Crops grow on farms.
Some farms grow wheat.
Other farms grow cotton.
A few farms grow Christmas trees!

The first Christmas tree farm was in New Jersey.
Twenty five thousand trees were planted in 1901.
The trees grew for seven years.
They were sold for $1.00 each.

Christmas trees grow in every state.
Oklahoma has about twenty Christmas tree farms.
Christmas tree farms are near cities.
People can cut their own Christmas trees.
Has your family cut a Christmas tree?

All About Christmas Trees

Activity 1 Worksheet 2: Facts About Christmas Trees

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write three facts about Christmas trees.

Fact #1

Fact #2

Fact #3

Name: _____ Date: _____

Photo from Library of Congress

Families cut their own Christmas trees in the 1800's.
They took a horse and wagon into the forest.
They picked out a tree.
They used an ax to cut the tree down.
They took it home on a wagon.

Mark Carr cut and sold trees in New York City in 1851.
He sold all of his trees in one day.
This was the first Christmas tree market.
His sons sold trees in the same place for 50 years.

Today people can buy Christmas trees at a store.
Most towns have a Christmas tree lot.
You might find a Christmas tree at the Farmers' Market.
Some towns are near a Christmas tree farm.

All About Christmas Trees

Activity 1 Worksheet 3: Facts About Christmas Tree Markets

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write three facts about Christmas tree markets.

Fact #1

Fact #2

Fact #3

Name: _____ Date: _____

Little Pine Tree

I am a little pine tree.
As you can see
All the other pine trees
Are bigger than me.
Maybe when I grow up
Then I will be
A great big merry Christmas tree!

Circle the words that rhyme.

Count the words that rhyme.

Trace the rhyming words

bee

three

free

we

me

she

Copy the rhyming words

Name: _____ Date: _____

Little Pine Tree

I am a little pine tree.
As you can see
All the other pine trees
Are bigger than me.
Maybe when I grow up
Then I will be
A great big merry Christmas tree!

Above   ↑   (Circle) the words that rhyme

Below   ↓   Write words that rhyme with tree

All About Christmas Trees

Activity 2   Grades PreK-2 Teacher Resources and Standards

Activity 2: Oklahoma Christmas Trees, (Social Studies) 1 50 minute class period
Students will find the locations of Oklahoma Christmas tree farms and create Christmas tree maps.
The will be introduced to how the price of Christmas trees is influenced by supply and demand.

Oklahoma Academic Standards
Activity 2: Oklahoma Christmas Trees (Social Studies)

PK.2.1   Explain that a map is a drawing of a place.

K.2.1   Explain that a globe is a model of the Earth and that a map is a drawing of a place;
              construct basic maps.

1.2.1   Describe the difference between physical and political maps; construct basic maps of
              specific places.

2.2.1   Construct basic maps using cardinal directions and map symbols.

1.4.3   Identify and explain the roles of consumers and producers in the American economy.

2.4.1   Explain the importance of supply and demand in the consumer and producer relationship

Materials:
- Map of Oklahoma
- Activity 2 Reading Page 1 **"Oklahoma Christmas Tree Farms"**
- Activity 2 Worksheet 2, **"Oklahoma Christmas Tree Map"**

Procedures
1. Christmas trees are a crop - just like wheat or cotton. Unlike other crops, most Christmas trees grown in Oklahoma are sold directly from the farm to consumers. When you buy a locally grown tree, you may personally know the producer.
2. Like other crops, the price of Christmas trees is influenced by supply and demand. Simply put, if ten people want Christmas trees, but there are only five trees left, demand is higher than the supply. However, if the farm has 50 trees for sale, but only ten people want trees, supply is higher than the demand.
3. Activity 2 Reading page 1 **"Oklahoma Christmas Tree Farms"** lists the farms in operation in 2021. It takes 5-7 years for trees to be ready to harvest, so depending on weather and the current crop, some farms are not open every year. Check a website like travelok.com for a current list each year.
4. Put a map of Oklahoma on the bulletin board and have students locate farms on the map with marks or push pins.
5. Students will use Activity 2 Worksheet 1 **"Oklahoma Christmas Tree Map"** to identify the counties with Christmas tree farms.
6. Discuss the results with students.
   —Are they any Christmas tree farms in your county? How far away is the closest farm?
   —Is there one part of the state where more Christmas tree farms are located?
   —Are the farms near a large population center?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Find the farms listed below on a map of Oklahoma.

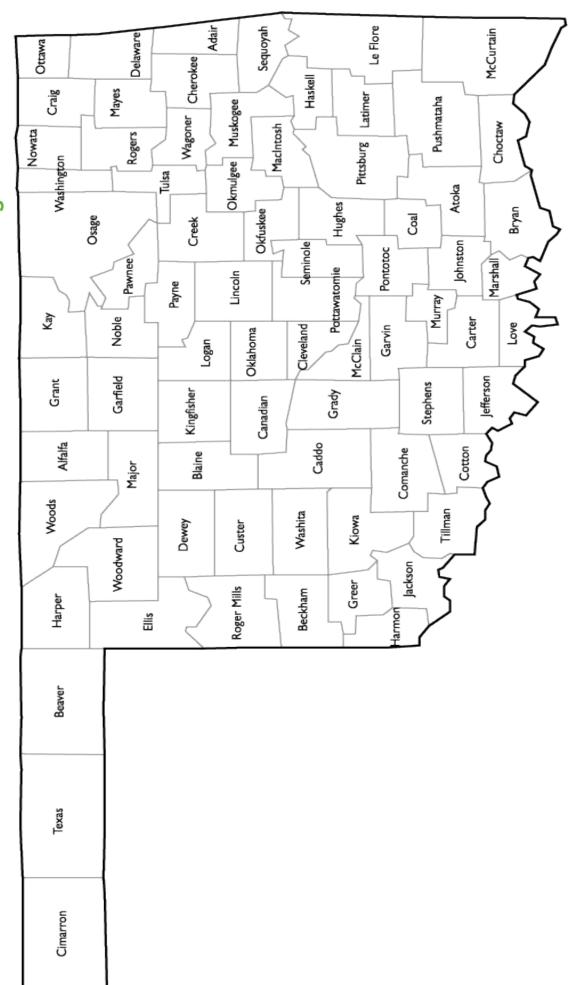|	
Canadian County	All Pine Christmas Tree Farm - Yukon OK
Cherokee County	Wilkinson Christmas Tree Forest - Tahlequah OK
Cleveland County	Wells Christmas Tree Farm - Norman OK
Comanche County	D & L Christmas Tree Farm - Fletcher OK
Creek County	Molly and Socks Christmas Tree Farm - Bristow OK Pleasant Valley Farms - Sand Springs OK
Garfield County	Red Bird Farm - Enid OK
Grady County	Martinbird Tree Farm - Tuttle OK Silver Bells Christmas Tree Farm - Tuttle OK
Kay County	Santa's Forest Tree Farm - Ponca City OK
Lincoln County	Fowble Christmas Tree Farm - Chandler OK
Muskogee County	Cal2Homa Farm - Gore OK
Oklahoma County	Cross Timbers Christmas Tree Farm - Harrah OK Coffee Creek Christmas Tree Farm - Arcadia OK Sorghum Mill Christmas Tree & Blackberry Farm - Edmond OK
Pawnee County	Double T Christmas Tree Farm - Glencoe OK
Pittsburg County	Red Barn Christmas Tree Farm - McAlester OK Peacable Hill Tree Farm - McAlester OK
Pottawatomie County	DNE - Tecumseh OK Yuletide Farms - Macomb OK
Sequoyah County	D & C Holiday Farm - Muldrow OK
Tulsa County	Owasso Christmas Tree & Berry Farm - Owasso OK

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Activity 2 Worksheet 1: Oklahoma Christmas Tree Map

Name: _____   Date: _____

Find the counties with Christmas tree farms. Color the counties green.

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Activity 3: Christmas Geometry, (Math, Visual Arts) # 50 minute class period

Students will model the geometry of nature by making triangular Christmas trees from craft materials.

Oklahoma Academic Standards
Activity 3: Christmas Geometry (Math, Visual Arts)

PK.GM.1.1   Identify circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles by pointing to the shape when given the name.

K.GM.1.1   Recognize squares, circles, triangles, and rectangles.

1.GM.1.4   Recognize three-dimensional shapes such as cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres.

2.GM.1.2   Describe, compare, and classify two-dimensional figures according to their geometric attributes.

PK.VA.CP.2.1   Engage in self-directed creative play with art materials.

K.VA.CP.2.1   Engage in directed exploration and imaginative play with art materials.

1.VA.CP.2.1   Engage collaboratively in exploration and imaginative play with materials.

2.VA.CP.2.1   Experiment with various materials and tools to explore personal interests in a work of art or design.

Materials:
- Supplies as listed on project sheets
- Activity 3 Project Sheet 1 **"Ribbon Christmas Trees"**
- Activity 3 Project Sheet 2 **"Craft Stick Christmas Trees"**

Procedures
1. Choose one of the projects and gather supplies. As you work on the projects, remind students that they are creating triangles with their supplies. Circles, spheres and rectangles are found in the decorations. Trees in nature are cone shaped. See AITC lesson **"Natural or Artificial"** if you want to make a cone-shaped feather tree.
2. Activity 3 Project Sheet 1 **"Ribbon Christmas Trees"** helps develop fine motor skills and manual dexterity. Ribbons or fabric strips should be pre-cut into 9-inch strips for younger students. Older students could measure and cut their ribbon strips as a math activity.
— It might be good to have extra adults available to trim the ribbons into a triangular shape. You will need sharp "sewing" scissors to trim the finished trees.
3. Activity 3 Project Sheet 2 **"Craft Stick Christmas Trees"** activity requires pre-cutting some of the craft sticks. One inch should be removed from one stick in each set of three sticks. A craft knife will work but, a small saw would be faster.
—Students can paint the sticks early in day if you have room for them to dry.
—Colored craft sticks are available at most hobby stores and would eliminate painting.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Supplies:

- Straight twigs about 6 inch long, craft sticks or cinnamon sticks
- Ribbon or ½ inch wide strips of fabric cut into 9 inch lengths (12 pieces for each tree)
- Low temperature glue gun and glue sticks
- Twine (6 inches for each tree)
- Beads or buttons for tree top
- Scissors

Steps:

1. Choose 12 pieces of ribbon or fabric.
2. Fold the twine in half and tie a knot. Glue the knot to the back side of one end of the twig or craft stick. This will be the top of the tree.
3. Tie the first piece of ribbon around the stick. Place the ribbon under the stick and tie the knot on the top side.   The glued twine should be under this strip of ribbon.
4. Continue to tie ribbons to the stick with the flat side on the back and the knot on top. Bunch the ribbons together so they overlap a little.
5. When all the strips have been used, pull on the ends of each ribbon to tighten the know. Have an adult trim the ribbons into a triangle shape.
6. Glue a bead, button or small wooden star to the top

Name: _____ Date: _____

Supplies:

- 3 craft sticks for each tree
- Acrylic or water based paint
- 1 inch square of brown cardstock
- A foam or cardstock star
- A 6 inch piece of twine
- Glue gun and glue sticks
- Craft/utility knife
- Decorations (tiny pom poms, shiny pipe cleaners, small bells, buttons, glitter, rhinestones)

Steps:

1. Trim 1 inch from the end of one craft stick. This will be the bottom of the tree.
2. Paint craft sticks and let them dry.
3. Put a drop of hot glue on each end of the short craft stick.
4. Position the two full length craft sticks on the short stick to make a triangle.
5. Fold the twine in half and sandwich the cut ends between the top of the triangle.
6. Put a drop of glue between the layers.
7. Glue the star to the top and the trunk to the bottom.
8. Use decorations as desired to trim the tree.