



Schools Tree Day – Year 1 & 2 – Local Forest Mural

Teacher preparation

Overarching learning goals: Students will use a basic concept of scale when they paint/draw their images and use location to place their images on the mural. Students are given the opportunity to connect to nature by discovering their local environment.

Teacher content information: There is no better way to connect students to nature than by helping them discover what's in their own backyard! In this activity, students will engage with their local environment by undertaking a nature walk, then they will create a class mural. Students can use the Student Worksheet to help them think about the plants and animals that they might find in their local environment. They will then draw and position the animals and trees on a class mural. Students may be familiar with many elements in their local environment, but as they learn more, they can add further elements to the class mural. It is best if the mural is not filled up immediately.

Student and classroom organisation

Step 1: Let's get outside!

Take your students outside on a nature walk. Ask them to explore using their senses. What do your students *see, hear and feel*?

Ask your students to think about the animals that they might not see right now either because they are too small or they come out at night.

Students can complete the Student Worksheet, which will support them

in thinking about what types of plants and animals are specific to their area. You will need to guide them through this process.

Step 2: Create a mural

Set up a space for the students to work. Cover a large area with paper. Draw a slope, towards the bottom of the page, a depression for a pond and on the other side of the pond, some flat land. A cloud and the sun could also be included. The only part that might be coloured in is the pond, and maybe the sky.

Explain to students that they will create a mural of a local forest with a pond. Find the slope, pond and flat land. Students can look at the photo on the Student Worksheet if they are stuck for ideas.

- **Plants** – Ask six students to draw/paint a large plant and cut it out. The rest of the students can draw/paint a small plant. Discuss what a big and a small plant might look like on the mural. When the plants are finished and cut out, they are placed appropriately on the mural. Plant cutouts can overlap. If any plant cutout is too large it will probably need to be left off.
- **Animals** – Students choose an animal to paint/draw. The animal they create must not be too large. One fish can't fill the pond. Students draw/paint and then cut out their animal. As a class discuss where the best location is for each of the animals.

Use the mural during the unit of work, modifying and adding to it as students discover more about biodiversity.

Call to action!

Following this lesson plan is an ideal way for your school to take part in the largest nature-care event in Australian schools, Planet Ark's Schools Tree Day. You'll be joining thousands of amazing teachers in making a difference, fostering a child's love of nature and creating positive environmental change. So, get growing! It only takes a minute to register at treeday.planetark.org.

