


Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to look for outdoors all year


When is a tree a tree? How old is it?

 We all know what a tree is! Of course we do.

But we had to learn what a tree is.



Imagine you are sitting with a toddler looking at a book of pictures.

The toddler points to a picture of a plant  and says, 'Tree!'

Is it a tree? It is a plant with a pretty flower,



But no! it is not a tree.



Of course, the quick solution is to point to a picture of a tree so that the toddler will learn.

In what way will the picture of the tree be different from a picture of any other plant?

- ✓ It will be a tall plant;
- ✓ It will have branches.
- ✓ It will have a thick, strong, **woody** trunk to support its height and heavy branches.



A plant is a tree if it has a thick woody stem.



Of course a tree doesn't start life with a thick woody trunk: it has to grow.




As a tree gets taller, its stem gets wider and becomes woody
 - and gets even stronger as it gets ever more woody.

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 As a 'rule of thumb', a broadleaf tree grows an inch in circumference each year. 'Rules of thumb' are not accurate but they give us a reasonable approximation.



Another word for 'circumference' is 'girth': the distance around a trunk (or circle).

 An inch is 2.5cm.



Let's measure some trees and see how old they might be.



Have a tape measure, (preferably one with inches on one side and centimetres on the other)

If you don't have a tape measure to take with you, ask someone to measure your arm span or perhaps you know your height: your arm span is near enough to, your height.



and



a pencil and paper,

or



phone or tablet on which to record your measurements.



Measure the girth of a tree by putting the tape measure around its trunk.

The reading in inches gives a good idea of the age of the tree: 63 inches on the tape measure means the tree is **about** 60 years old. The reading would have been about 157 cm ($157 \div 2.5 = 62.8$)



Or you might prefer to hug a tree, using yourself as a tape measure.



Sometimes you will need other people to complete the measurement



Or a tree might be too small for a complete hug.

You will have to use that tape measure - or do some estimating.

However you do it, have fun and enjoy being outdoors.



For more about trees, fun things to look for and do indoors and outdoors - and about Hello Trees books, see the [Hello Trees website](http://www.hellotrees.co.uk).