FOREST EDUCATION NETWORK ENGLAND

Tree Tales

For Teachers

Age: 5 - 11 year olds

Minimum time needed: This activity works best as a visit but can also be done in the classroom.

Curriculum links:

History KS1&2

- Local history studies/significant historical people and places in their own locality.

History KS1

- Understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past.

Learn about traditional tales that link famous trees and people to give an insight into what life was like in the past.

Get Ready

You might wish to plan a visit with your class to one of the historic trees listed below or to a significant tree in your local area.

Do you have trees in local parks, churchyards, stately homes or on main roads that are part of the story of your community? Were they planted by a famous landowner or industrialist? Have important events for your community happened nearby?

Some notable historic trees

- **The Major Oak:** Sherwood Forest
- **The Domesday Oak:** Bristol
- **The Betty Kenny Tree:** Derbyshire
- **The Ankerwycke Yew:** Berkshire
- **The Tolpuddle Martyrs Tree:** Dorset
- **The Hardy Tree:** London
- **The Royal Oak**: Shropshire
- **Newton's Apple Tree:** Woolsthorpe, Lincolnshire
- **The Chained Oak**: Alton, Staffordshire

The Major Oak

Get Set

Discuss:
Why do we visit trees today? Why do you think they might have played a role in historical events?

Hint - Common themes are shade, protection and somewhere to hide. If your local history is about the planting of trees, rarer trees were often planted as a sign of wealth and power with landowners and industrialists bringing trees back from the wider British Empire and beyond.

Go

Read: Stories about local trees, or, signpost older pupils to research the story online.

Share: Discoveries, stories, pictures about the tree and/or discuss why they think the tree is significant locally and/or nationally historically.

Create: Your own retelling of the story or events that include this tree.

Tree Tale Storyboard Template
🌳 Where? Woodland, forest or local place
🧒 Who? Is the main character?
⚠️ Event? What happens, does anything go wrong?
🏁 'The End'. How does the tale end?

Go Beyond

How can you communicate the tale of your tree in different ways to ensure that the story is passed on to future generations?