

Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE



How Old Is Your Christmas Tree?

Each year, a tree grows a new layer of wood under its bark. By counting these layers, called rings, you can discover the age of a tree.

This year, after you take the decorations off your Christmas tree, count its rings! One ring equals one year. (The bark is not a ring.) Can you find out the age of your tree?

My name is Dr. Cypress Sapling. I'm a dendrochronologist. What's that? Well, a dendrochronologist is a scientist who studies the rings of trees.



The rings of a tree can also show what the climate of the forest was during different years.

Look at the tree trunk pictured above. Some of the rings are wide and some of them are thin. A wide ring tells us that this was a good year for growing. There was the right amount of water and sunlight. Drought causes slower growth and narrow rings. Dark spots tell us that the tree survived a fire that year.

Reading Rings Tells Past

By reading the rings of trees, dendrochronologists can read the story of our planet, stories that reside in living trees and in logs used to build ancient buildings. Tree rings have told of weather patterns that lead to severe fires. They have revealed century-long droughts, insect plagues and times of volcanic eruptions.

Standards Link: Life Science: When the environment changes, plant growth and survival are affected.

My Christmas tree survived a fire one year. What year was that? In what year was my tree planted? Is my tree older than you? Find the ring that grew in 2011. Was this a good growing year for the tree?



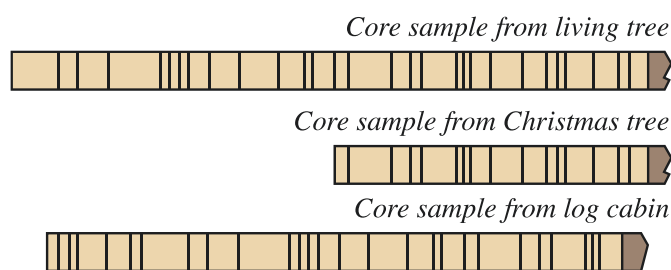
Standards Link: Math: Students use strategies, skills and concepts in finding solutions.

Read the Rings

I don't have to cut down trees to read their rings. Using a special tool called an increment borer, I can take a core sample from a living tree. A core sample is about the size of a soda straw, and the rings look like lines.



I found an old log cabin while hiking last week. I took a core sample from the logs to find the age of the cabin.



Compare the core samples to see where the patterns of the rings match. The last ring of the living tree grew in the year 2014. Count backwards from the bark to find out the age of each tree. Cutting out the strips makes comparing easier.

Use the core samples to complete the chart below.

	Age of the tree	Year tree was cut down	Year tree was planted
LIVING TREE			
DR. SAPLING'S CHRISTMAS TREE			
LOG FROM CABIN			

Standards Link: Math: Use a table to sort information and compute results.

Extra! Extra!

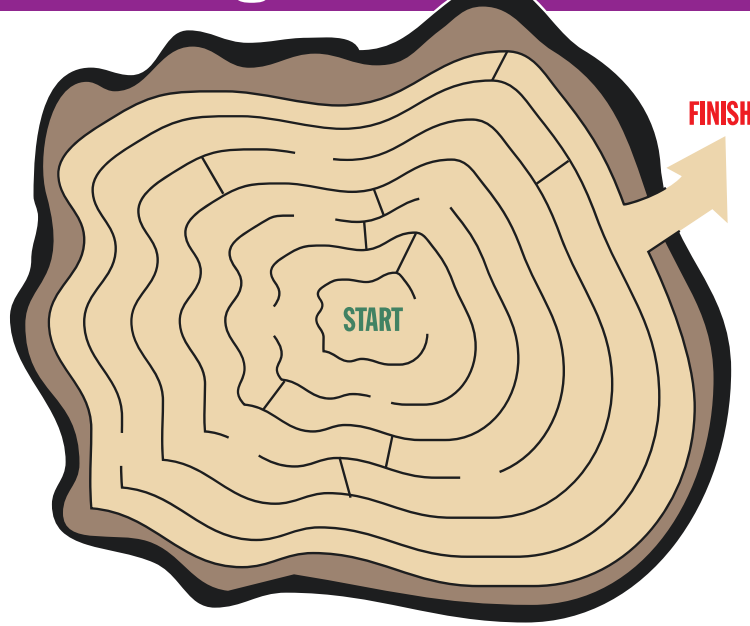
Look Inside

Make a list of 18 words from the newspaper that have double vowels. Circle the vowels. Underline the vowel whose sound you hear when you say the word.

**HEAT
BOAT
EIGHT**

Standards Link: Decoding: Recognize vowel digraphs.

Tree Ring Maze



Standards Link: Visual discrimination.

Double Double Word Search

- GROWING
- TREES
- RINGS
- WOOD
- BARK
- COUNTING
- TRUNK
- FIRE
- CORE
- CABIN
- AGE
- SAMPLES
- PREDICT
- WEATHER

Find the words in the puzzle, then in this week's Kid Scoop stories and activities.



Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

Make a News Timeline

- Use a strip of paper 60" long to make the timeline.
- Divide the strip into enough equal segments to show the number of weeks left in the school year.
- Find a newspaper article that interests you. Write the headline, lead sentence and date of the article in the first segment.
- Follow the newspaper for more stories about this news item and add each story or commentary to the timeline.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow multiple-step directions.

What did the tree say to the beaver?



ANSWER: "Leaf me alone!"

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