

Four reasons trees are more like humans than you think

Level 3: Advanced

Article summary: This article examines four facts about trees that demonstrate how they are able to share resources with other plant species. It also highlights some of the similarities between humans and trees.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Fixed expressions

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

Key:

1. *taxonomist*
2. *saplings*
3. *girth*
4. *arboreal*
5. *labyrinth*
6. *felled*
7. *pheromones*
8. *breach*
9. *wafting*
10. *array*
11. *audible*
12. *sloughed*
13. *thrive*
14. *marauders*
15. *fungi*
16. *nemeses*
17. *inextricably*
18. *partition*

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to get students thinking about trees and the ways in which they can communicate with each other. Before students read the article, ask them to tell you any similarities they can think of between trees and humans. You can extend the activity by asking students to name the types of trees they know and in what parts of the world they are usually found, e.g. *olive trees – Mediterranean countries / the Middle East*, etc.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work individually to match the words from the article to the correct definitions. Remind them to look at the different forms of any verbs (e.g. simple past, present continuous, etc.) in the definitions as these will give them clues as to the form of the verb from the article. For an extra challenge, ask students for the names of any arboreal animals they know (animals that live in trees, e.g. possums, squirrels, flying squirrels, tree frogs, bats, monkeys, apes, etc.) Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class. Explain to students that *fungi* is the plural form of the singular noun *fungus*.

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using words from the previous activity in the correct form.

Key:

1. *breach*
2. *labyrinth*
3. *saplings*
4. *audible*
5. *inextricably*
6. *wafting*
7. *taxonomist*
8. *felled*
9. *girth*
10. *thrive*
11. *sloughed*
12. *marauders*
13. *nemeses*
14. *fungi*
15. *arboreal*
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3. Comprehension check

- a. Students can work individually or in pairs to do this activity. Encourage them to highlight the section of the article where they found the answers to the questions.

Key:

1. *b*
2. *b*
3. *c*
4. *a*
5. *d*
6. *c*

4. Key language

- a. Students work individually to find the expressions in the article and match them to the correct definition. You might like to ask students to try to work out what the expressions mean from the context before they match them to the definitions.

Key:

1. *ward off*
2. *tap into*
3. *in pole position*
4. *plug that gap*
5. *fare much better*
6. *inner workings*
7. *play a waiting game*
8. *delve a little deeper*

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences with the words from the previous activity in the correct form. To extend the activity, ask students to work in pairs to write example sentences of their own using the expressions.

Key:

1. *inner workings*
2. *delve a little deeper*
3. *fare much better*
4. *plug that gap*
5. *in pole position*

6. *ward off*
7. *play the waiting game*
8. *tap into*

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. The aim of this task is to get students to produce a social media post from the point of view of a tree in order to demonstrate the way that humans and trees communicate with one another using different networks. Give them some time to work together in small groups to produce their social media posts. Remind them that they should think about the tone of their post before they write it, as this will affect the type of language that they use.
- b. Give students time to write their posts before they present them to the class. Encourage them to explain their post and what responses they may get for.