



Inspired by nature!

GRADES 1-4

Members of the Group of Seven, like Lawren Harris, were inspired by nature and often went hiking to make sketches and get ideas for their artwork.

Go for a walk and take inspiration from nature in your neighbourhood with the following activities.

ART ACTIVITIES

Create a landscape collage

Collect natural objects like leaves, twigs, grass, flowers and bark (make sure you only take bark that's already fallen off the tree). Move the objects around on a piece of paper until you are happy with how it looks. Take a photo then start again! If you have thick paper and glue you can stick your materials on the paper.

Make your own natural paintbrush

For the handle, find a straight stick about the length of a pencil. For the bristles, gather needles and leaves—bunches of pine needles work really well! To make the brush, spread the bristles around the end of the handle stick. Take some string or twine and wrap it firmly around the handle a few times, tie it tight and cut off the extra string. This can be fiddly and it helps to have two sets of hands. Grab some paint and paper and start painting! Different materials will create different patterns and textures. Try making a few paintbrushes with different materials that are different sizes.

Draw a detailed portrait of a tree

Choose your favourite tree and create a detailed drawing of it. Imagine its personality. Try to capture this with the colours and lines you use.



Lawren Stewart Harris

Athabasca Valley, Jasper Park
Around 1924, oil on wood
Gift of the Gertrude Mathewman Bequest, 1986
(29-076)

If you'd like to extend the lesson beyond visual art, here are some other activities

Write a haiku

Choose your favourite tree in your yard or neighbourhood. Write a haiku about it. A haiku poem usually consists of three lines. The first and last lines have five syllables each and the middle line has seven.

Pose like a tree

Stand tall like the tree in Lawren Harris's painting. Then, slouch over like a weeping willow. How does it feel to stand tall and stand slouched? Do you feel happier one way or the other?

Make a nature journal

List different plants and animals that you see on a walk, or even from your window. Describe what they look like and draw a quick sketch. If you know their names, include them.

Observe, compare and contrast

Choose two trees that look quite different. Think of ways they are similar and different. Create a Venn diagram of what's different and what's the same based on your observations.

GLOSSARY

Landscape: Landscapes are pictures of the outdoors and they usually show things that are in nature such as trees, hills, rivers and mountains, but sometimes they also feature man-made things like houses.

Collage: A collage is a unique work of art made by combining different materials such as photos, magazine clippings and small objects on a surface such as a piece of paper.

Group of Seven: This was a group of painters from 1920 to 1933 who were best known for their paintings inspired by the Canadian landscape. They wanted to create a uniquely Canadian style of art and believed in getting out into nature to sketch and paint.