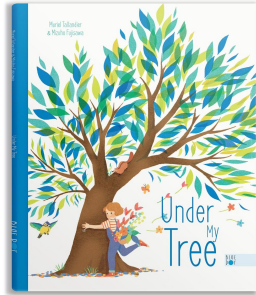


Teacher's Guide

Under My Tree

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Susanne has a new friend at her grandparent's country home: a tree. As the seasons pass, Susanne and her tree spend many precious hours together playing, singing, and learning about each other.

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Before Reading

Discussion

1. Discuss the title and cover illustrations.
2. What do the title and cover illustrations tell us about the book?
3. In the title, *Under My Tree*, whose tree is it? Who do you think “My” refers to in the story?
4. Why would someone feel that a tree belongs to them?
5. Do you have a special tree?
6. Describe how you interact with trees.
7. What do you know about trees? Chart responses.

Physical Characteristics of Trees	Uses for Trees	Where I Find Trees

8. Take a “picture walk” through the book.

- Invite students to predict what the story will be about: **who, what, where, when, why, and how.**
- Notice the words in the leaves at the bottom of some of the pages—“**Try this**” and “**Did you know?**” Discuss that “side text” relates to the main text of the story by giving us information or asking interesting questions.
- Discuss how the illustrations enhance the meaning and tone of the story.

Word Work

A. New Vocabulary

Bark, complicated, labyrinth, spectacular, symphony, chorus, colony, biodiversity, hibernate, species, purify, scent

1. Introduce students to new vocabulary words from the story.
2. Discuss the new words from the story.
3. Explain that many of the words are difficult on their own; however, we can learn the meaning of unknown words by reading them in context.

Ex: The test was not simple. It was **complicated**.

So, what does **complicated** mean?

4. Another strategy is to guess what the word means and then look it up in the dictionary or look for word parts.

Ex: **biodiversity** = **biological** (bio) = life on Earth + diversity = different

So, **biodiversity** = different kinds of life on Earth

B. Figurative Language: Literal vs Nonliteral Meanings

- Figurative language is the use of words in an imaginative and unusual way.
- Figurative language uses comparisons.
- Figurative language makes stories interesting.

Discuss the examples below. What does the sentence really mean?

- You are my sunshine.
- You are a couch potato.

C. Personification: Giving Human Characteristics to Something Nonhuman

- The wind howled in the night.
- That cookie is calling my name.

Now you think up a few. Write the responses on chart paper.

During Reading

Think About It

1. Who is telling the story? (point of view)
2. Where and when does the story take place? (setting)
3. Who is the main character? (character)
4. What is the main character like? (characteristics)
5. What is happening in the story? (plot)
6. How does the author structure the story? How does the author let the reader know that time is passing? (structure/form)
7. What are the central themes or ideas? (themes)
8. How do the illustrations contribute to the meaning of the story?
9. What do new vocabulary words mean in the story?
10. How does the author, Muriel Tallendier, use personification in ***Under My Tree?***
11. How does the side text—"**Did you know?**" and "**Try this**"—relate to the story?
12. How does the story change from the beginning to the end of the book?

Read the story aloud to the group.

Have the students reread the story silently or in small groups.

After Reading

A. Identify **cause and effect** relationships from the story.

Cause	Effect
	<p><i>Susanne can tell that summer is ending.</i></p> <p><i>Susanne gets a spectacular view of the forest's edge.</i></p> <p><i>Susanne hugs her tree one last time and takes a leaf from the tree.</i></p> <p><i>People can breathe.</i></p>

B. What do the following phrases and sentences mean in the story? Which ones are considered “personification”? Explain.

- *I wanted to introduce him to my new friend.*
- *The sun kissed the treetops.*
- *The tree was tall enough to touch the clouds.*
- *dressed in green leaves*
- *I hoped it wouldn't hurt the tree.*
- *My tree sang with her leaves, using the wind as her lungs.*
- *Thank you, friend, for making me so happy.*

* There are more examples of figurative language in ***Under My Tree***. See if you can find them!

C. Go back to the story as a group. Add things that you learned about trees to the chart you started before.

1. Draw a picture and write a sentence about how the seasons—spring, summer, fall, and winter—changed in the story;
2. Why was Susanne afraid in the beginning of the story? How did she change?
3. What are the themes of the story?
4. Discuss the themes of friendship and appreciation for our natural world.
5. What can the themes of ***Under My Tree*** teach you about your own life?
6. Would you like to be friends with Susanne? Explain.
7. Would you like to be friends with a tree?

8. How does Susanne use her imagination when she is in the forest? How do you use your imagination when you are outdoors?
9. Why do you think the author chose ***Under My Tree*** as the title for this book? Think of another title that would be appropriate.
10. Why do you think Muriel Tallandier wrote this book? What is she trying to answer, explain, or describe?
11. **Biodiversity** means all of the different kinds of life found on Earth. Go back to the book and find all of the living things from the story. Share as a group.
12. Susanne uses her five senses in the story: smell, sight, taste, hearing, and touch. Find examples of this from the story and note them in the chart.

Smell	Sight	Taste	Hearing	Touch

Activity: Become a Community Scientist!

Community science, also called citizen science, happens when people study the world around them and send the data they collect to scientists. Citizen scientists are people—young or old, who have attended a lot of school or very little, from cities and from small towns—who help collect data for research projects and help to answer real scientific questions.

Join Project Squirrel: No matter where you live, city or suburb, from the Midwest to the East Coast, Canada to California, if squirrels live in your neighborhood, you are encouraged to become a squirrel monitor.

Fox squirrels and gray squirrels are two of the most familiar species of wildlife in many neighborhoods and natural areas. In addition to being interesting animals to watch, squirrels can tell us a lot about our local environment and how it is changing. To gain this insight, we must gather data about as many individual squirrels in as many places as possible. This is where you come in! By contributing your observations of squirrels from home, school, a park, or anywhere, you are helping us better understand the ecology of our neighborhoods.

For more information, check out the Project Squirrel website: <https://projectsquirrel.org>.