

Forest Products

GRADES 3–5

Guiding Question

What products in your daily life come from forests, and how does their use affect the environment?

Connecting Concepts

- Energy and fuels that humans use are derived from natural sources, and their use affects the environment in multiple ways. Some resources are renewable over time, and others are not. (NGSS, ESS3.A: Natural Resources)
- Human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth's resources and environments. (NGSS, ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems)
- Forests are the source of products that people use every day (e.g., paper, tissue, furniture, food, clothing, house framing, and more.) (PLT FLF, 2.B.3; see related FLF Concepts 2.A.10 and 2.B.4)
- Resources that we use and consume every day are connected to forests. We have the opportunity to choose products (e.g., renewable, legally sourced, certified) that support sustainability. (PLT FLF, 4.A.2)

Scope and Sequence

The collection and arrangement of content below supports an intentional student learning progression.

Activity	Description
Trees for Many Reasons	Students read and analyze a story about conserving natural resources.
Peek at Packaging	Students examine the pros and cons of different packaging and then design an “ideal” package.
Make Your Own Paper (in Grades K–2, see 3–5 Variation)	Students learn about the papermaking process by trying it themselves.

See plt.org/academic-standards for detailed standards correlations for each activity.

Storyline

Students explore how people depend on forests for many different products and how people can use forest resources sustainably.

- Begin with the activity **Trees for Many Reasons**. Introduce the story by asking students to think about natural resources they use every day. After the story, encourage them to consider what would happen if one of the natural resources was “used up.”
- Next, use the activity **Peek at Packaging**, in which students analyze consumer packaging to determine what resources are used to make different packaging and list the benefits of and problems with each. Encourage students to design a packaging method that overcomes some of the problems.
- Conclude with **Make Your Own Paper**. As students craft new paper from recycled paper, encourage them to identify the inputs and outputs of the papermaking process and to assess its sustainability. In the Variation for Grades 3–5, students can research new ways that people use or make paper and consider how the new methods affect sustainability.