

The Ancient Tree Hunt

UNIT 4: TEACHERS' SHEET

(Suggested time: 1–6 hours)

Design and Ancient Trees – introduction and overview

Using many of the skills your students have learnt in previous lessons design a series of posters, magazine articles and front covers, ask them to produce a short video and finally a web site page of an ancient tree in their district.

Some of this work is to be done using computers, some photography and video and some as fine art on paper or canvas.

This unit will require knowledge of how to use type in a controlled way to make titles and content. Study a range of typefaces serif and sans serif and use a suitable word processing or design program to do this.

Use photography or drawings to create student illustrations. They could look at commercial magazines to study methods of layout and design.

Students should look at the Woodland Trust web site to see the different articles and layout of a web site, then make their own web site page with stories and links as a group exercise.

Teamwork is required throughout in these lessons.

This project will assume that you are able to have studied the Ancient Tree Hunt web site with your students as part of the introduction.

General resources:

Rulers
Pencils of varying hardness HB–9B
Pencil sharpener
Rubber
Conté or charcoal
Hand cleaning cloths
Magnifying glass
Drawing books A4 or A3
Notepads, grid paper and clipboards
Water pots and painting materials
Have available photographic prints, notes and drawings from the earlier session (Part 1).

This project can be designed to integrate with other subjects such as English, History and Drama if desired. Each part is also designed as a separate lesson if you prefer to omit the other parts.

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Main Curriculum Links

Skills

Understanding

1. use their knowledge about the work of other artists, craftworkers and designers to enrich and inform their work through analysis/comparison/evaluation
2. explore the diverse working practices of artists, craftworkers and designers from different periods/places/cultures, considering their purpose and intentions

Investigating

1. develop specific skills for recording from observation/experience/memory/ imagination and develop specific skills for investigating the natural and made environment using a variety of materials
2. explore and organise a range of reference materials/range of resources to establish and develop ideas
3. keep a sketchbook to address different aspects of investigating to develop ideas and feelings/explore themes/explore and experiment with materials and processes/initiate and support independent work

Making

1. explore and experiment with and apply the visual, tactile and sensory language of art, craft and design
2. design and make images and artefacts using a variety of materials, processes and ideas
3. experience a wide range of techniques and media to realise their ideas/express their feelings and communicate meaning.

Range

Understanding

Be stimulated and inspired by artists, craftworkers and other designers/the work of their peers/methods and processes/images and artefacts from a variety of historical and contemporary cultures and contexts.

Develop their understanding through books/videos/digital-based resources/the internet.

Investigating

Investigate the properties of materials and processes/natural objects and environments/made objects and environments.

Apply to their own work relevant findings collected from books/videos/digital-based resources/the internet/their own practical experimentations and recordings and a variety of contexts including local and Welsh examples.

Making

Have opportunities to work in the open air, taking account of the dangers and risks in their art and design activities. Follow instructions to reduce risk to themselves and others.

Other Curriculum Links

Developing communication: Oracy, Reading, Writing, Wider Communication

Developing ICT

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Part 1

Learning Objectives

Study and interpret data from the Ancient Tree Hunt web site and use this as a resource in this lesson.

Investigate other media such as magazines and newspapers to study methods of illustration and writing.

Study the use of words and type to gain attention or to convey information.

Learn to use scripts, planning and production techniques and work as a team to achieve a common goal.

Learn to draw from observation using a range of materials and techniques to record detail.

Learn to appreciate and value the importance of our trees and wildlife and learn about the bio-diversity and ecology of our countryside.

Lesson Structure

Discuss with students the role of the Woodland Trust and The Ancient Tree Hunt web sites. What is their purpose, what are they aiming to achieve? What are the benefits and objectives of a school project working in collaboration with these organizations?

Discuss Ancient Trees – their age and history – their size and scale. Talk about the environment, and the worries we have about global warming. What can we do individually and as a nation to protect our environment from global issues of pollution and climate change and save and develop what we have today?

Discuss the main objectives of this lesson.

To produce one or all of the following:

1. A magazine cover and article on ancient trees in your district.
2. A poster to advertise this tree or trees.

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Equipment needed for outdoor activities:

Measuring tools: 1 x long cloth or flexible tape (6–10m), rulers.

Pencils of varying hardness HB–9B

Pencil sharpener

Rubber

Conté or charcoal

Hand cleaning cloths.

Drawing books A4 or A3

Notepads, grid paper and clipboards

Magnifying glass

Suitable outdoor clothing and shoes

Cameras

Video camera and tripod

Sound recorder for interviews

Collection bag for small leaves, seeds and twigs
(Please take care not to damage any trees)

3. A video documentary to tell the story of an ancient tree in your district for use on a web site.

4. A web page to include all of the above items.

Discuss how the above projects can encourage and inform the public to be aware of ancient trees and encourage them to take an interest in understanding and preserving them.

Look at magazines and articles on conservation and if possible study some nature documentaries beforehand so that these can be discussed and analysed before starting work. This project can be used in a range of ways: as designs for posters, articles for a magazine or a story on your schools web site.



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The objectives include recording and storing information about a student's chosen tree. Ask them to record and document this information using sketching, notebooks, cameras and video and sound recordings (the last two are for the web site). Work out a shooting script so that when the first part of the project is complete you will have enough information to continue and complete the final parts of the project.

Part I – Activities

For this first part of the lesson you will need to arrange a location trip to the site of an ancient tree. Prior to this visit ensure that students have looked at the Ancient Tree Hunt web site and downloaded useful leaflets such as identifying tree species, measuring trees. Familiarise your students with the concept of the site and the country code. Have with you the resources for recording and measuring your tree.

All of the information required is available on the Ancient Tree Hunt web site, view here for a list of publications available.

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum/atfresources/resourcesbooks.htm).

Leaf and twig identification sheets can be found at www.naturedetectives.org.uk

Part I – Preliminary Activities

Prepare for the outdoor part of this lesson beforehand. The students can work as a team. Some will do drawings, others measurements and notes about the tree, another group will take photographs and record some video clips and sound. These pieces of work will later be edited and pieced together to form a story about the tree, its habitat and history along with the work the students are aiming to compile.

With the end result in mind, you must determine who will do what and what you are setting out to achieve. This is a very

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flexible project and the ideas given here are really to ignite imagination and allow the freedom to develop it in the student's own style.

Study and record the chosen tree on site

Now discuss with students the following points while investigating the chosen tree (taking time to survey all around your tree). Be careful to respect the land or property you are on and not to damage any of the trees and plants around it.

What sort of condition is the tree in?

(It would help to study the section on measuring ancient trees in the KS3 Art and Design lesson on Measurement – this will give information and guidance on measuring ancient trees and will help to construct your story and facts).

Is there a farmer, shopkeeper or landowner with interesting facts or stories about the tree who would be willing to talk to you and be interviewed?

Either write down notes to help compile a voice over script later or if possible record this using a tape or video camera.

Try and interview elderly locals who have some memory of how the tree looked in their childhood and what was happening at that period of time, for example, at the end of World War 2, rationing, different modes of transport and architecture all make interesting stories to illustrate and write about or even record.

A group can be assigned to drawing or painting different angles of the tree. Another can take still photos of leaves, branches and long shots of the tree looking for interesting and dramatic angles. Remember to include people (with their permission) when possible, certainly some of the students at work would be worthwhile recording as this may feature in the visuals later.



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Notes on how to photograph and video the tree

Discuss with students

Choose suitable vantage points to have interesting or dramatic views of the tree. These may be looking steeply up the trunk of the tree to the branches above or long views with surrounding landscape.

Take various shots to include close up images of leaves, buds and seeds, long shots showing the surroundings and dramatic shots at steep angles. Try shooting through leaves to get out of focus foregrounds. Include pictures of your fellow students working and recording information.

If you have a video camera repeat this exercise making sure that you keep the camera steady and slowly pan around subjects. A tripod is invaluable for video as nothing is more off putting than shaky camera movement. Make sure that you have enough footage from a variety of angles to allow you to edit your material later.

The object of this exercise is to document and record as much information as possible for use in the next part of this lesson.

You may decide that someone in the group acts as a presenter and describes the events as they happen thereby capturing the spontaneity of the moment and also acting as a guide to the project. This is where planning beforehand is important – know your subject and explain clearly what is happening. If you make a mistake in recording simply start again from a suitable in point, (you can edit it together later). This narration will act as an anchor to the informal pieces of information and maintain the continuity.

If possible prepare a shooting script beforehand – if not take account of your situation and try to outline in note form which shots, angles and content will be useful to use in the final edit. Remember that you are better to shoot too much than to find that you do not have enough to tell your story later. It is always a good idea to take some general views to act as fill in shots in case someone has accidentally shaken the camera during filming.

Make sketches and observations as drawings

The sketching group should work together and decide who does what. Some may draw details of buds and leaves while others may work on wider views showing the whole tree and it's surroundings. Ask students to draw in charcoal, pen and ink or pencils and wash. Ask them to try and feel the mood this tree invokes inside them and portray this in their work. Later this can be scanned and used as stills in the video or as illustrations in posters or articles. Although this is not animation by panning across a drawing this can make an interesting sequence.

Remember they are working on a documentary style article so no one piece of work is seen separately; this is a mixture of words, sounds and visuals that work together to tell a story.

At this stage students should now have a range of drawings and close observations along with a series of photographs, video and sound clips and notes about their tree.



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Part 2 – Learning Objectives

Students should translate the information recorded in the outdoor session into one or more of the chosen projects.

- Design;
 - a magazine article
 - a poster or video clip for use on the school web site
 - an article for a local newspaper
- Learn interviewing skills.
- Examine and analyse organic objects in detail and record this information.
- Select and use the most suitable media for projects.
- Use knowledge of other subjects such as English, Science, Maths and History to support the learning.
- Work together as a team to produce final artwork.
- Discuss each other's work in a fair and critical manner to improve on the results.

Equipment needed for indoor activities:

Access to computers with word processing, design and photo manipulation software
 Scanning equipment and printers
 Video editing software
 Web publishing software
 Various nature magazines, illustrations and books for reference
 Drawing materials, notes and work produced in outdoor activities as above
 Painting materials

Part 2 – Activity

This part is split into four options – either one, or all of them can be undertaken at the discretion of the tutor:

1. A magazine cover and article on ancient trees in your district.
2. A poster to advertise this tree or trees.
3. A video documentary to tell the story of an ancient tree in your district for use on a web site.
4. A web page to show all of the above.

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KS3 Art and Design

Design ANCIENT TREES

Part 2.1

Design a magazine cover and article on ancient trees in your district

Part 2.1 – Activity (Method)

Ask students to look at the subject and decide which are the important facts that need to be made in an article to make it an interesting story.

Using the observations, notes, drawings and photographs that were made at the site of the ancient tree ask students to compile some ideas for the magazine cover and article.

They have studied a local tree and want to make others aware of its presence and importance. Is there a story to attach to it? Perhaps there are some historical facts to be learned? Maybe it grows on an old boundary line or path? Try looking up some of the old maps of your area to see the differences between the roads and fields centuries ago.

Magazines tend to specialise in certain sectors such as cars, gardens, people and hobbies. They tend to illustrate stories about interesting subjects and topics. Imagine how their tree can fit into this dimension. What is the story? How can they illustrate it in an innovative way?

Look at some of the magazines that they are using as examples and study their layout and ideas.

Ask students to look at text styles and picture usage and try and understand the techniques they are using to sell their magazines.

From their earlier visit to the ancient tree they will have already prepared some notes. The first challenge is to seek out a story, look at the old maps, they may have talked to the

Resources Part 2.1

Notes, photographs and sketches from outdoor session Part 1

Paints and papers

Pencils and pens

Rulers

Magazines for reference

landowners and asked the public. Once they have some facts they can start to write the words – ask them to give it an introduction and the reasons why they want to write about the tree and then sew in the fabric of the story. Short pieces of information can be used as snippets in small boxes or as captions to illustrations.

The next challenge is the images, here they should look for variety, don't be afraid to mix painting and photography together. Look for images that illustrate the words that have been written. Sometimes the picture comes first and the words can be a description of the image. For example they may want to write about the seeds of the tree and how they are distributed (via birds and squirrels or wind) using a good photograph or drawing to illustrate this.

If scanning the drawings then try taking small sections and enlarge them to get the texture of the paint or charcoal. These can look very graphic if enlarged considerably. Add captions and credits and support their interesting story with good strong images.

When working with content text use set column widths to make the reading easy on the eye.

Students can be more creative with large text and text shapes on the magazine cover or the introduction to sections. Study the ways that other magazines use text and pictures together, a lot can be learned from studying other designer's work. Look at details such as column widths and

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spacing, text size and colour, picture boxes and layouts and other graphic techniques.

Try to use just one or two fonts that are easily read. Times and Arial are often used and are perhaps the most popular fonts in general use. Times is a serif font and Arial is a sans serif (it means without a serif, the serif is the curly edges that you see on the ends of the letters). Some of the other more unusual fonts tend to be used for headings or graphic effects, these would not be used where lots of text is to be read as it would be slow and hard to read quickly.

The cover is the page that sells the magazine – this is what you glance at amongst all the many different magazines lining the bookshop shelves. Sometimes only the top section is visible so the title and top half must do the selling.

Encourage students to work out a short but dynamic title and then look at typefaces and colours. They have a chance to be creative here so don't let them be afraid to try lots of ideas before settling on a design they like. This can be done in a group where ideas, names and suggestions are all thrown into the pot and this promotes lateral thinking. In advertising agencies and design groups often a team of people will get together to think up good ideas and concepts rather than leave it to one person.

Add other images and text to the cover to promote the content of the article inside and they will soon have the cover ready to print.

Now they need to work out how many pages are needed to prepare to design the content of the article. Maybe a large picture can be used as a background for a double page spread with smaller pictures and text placed across it. Try out different layouts making sure that it is still easy to read their article. Add captions to pictures to complete the layout.

Finally print out all the pages and cover and bind them together and they will have their own finished magazine article.



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Part 2.2 – Design a poster to advertise this tree or trees

Activity

Discuss with students that when considering a poster design it is important to understand what you are trying to achieve.

A poster is a visual pointer to alert someone to a happening or an event.

- What are the events, stories, and ideas that you can use to illustrate these?
- What are the best methods of doing this and how can you make an effective poster?
With this in mind both the illustration and the text need to be well thought out before commencing work.
- Using the observations, notes, drawings and photographs that were made at the site of the ancient tree start to compile some ideas for the poster.
- Study and compare the work of other designers and artists who have designed posters (such as Toulouse Lautrec, Picasso, Matisse, Degas and modern graphic designers).
- What were these artists trying to say with their designs?
- What are posters used for?
- Some examples are advertising, events, exhibitions, products or simply works of art. Where do you see posters displayed? On trains, bus stops, poster hoardings and public buildings such as libraries (mainly public access sites).
- What techniques are used to create eye-catching posters?
- Use of dynamic images, bold text, words or phrases, logos and graphic styles are some of these. Scanning a part of a drawing and making it much larger can produce very graphic results. For example imagine an enlarged drawing of leaves made to fit a large poster. The texture of the pencil or charcoal will be magnified and enlarged and this will emphasize the texture of the charcoal.

Resources Part 2.2

Notes, photographs and sketches from outdoor session Part 1

Paints and papers

Pencils and pens

Rulers

- What elements can be used to make an ancient tree poster eye-catching?
- Some ideas are graphic images of trees, strong angles, beautiful landscapes, textures, close up images, and interesting lighting effects.
- A montage made of different images at different scales such as an oak tree, acorns and leaves. (Example: The acorn could be featured as a giant size with the tree growing inside it).
- Use of text and logo designs using complimentary or harmonising colours and shapes to work with the images used.
- Try using large letters that can be used as shapes – for example the word “leaves” could be stretched across a poster with a montage of leaves seen through it or even entwining the letters.
- By using letter shapes, and images (including photographs, drawings and paintings) a set of posters could be produced to display in the class using the theme of typography or colour. Or you could consider designing a theme on an ancient tree such as seasons, or details such as bark, buds, leaves, roots and creatures that live in the tree.

Remember a poster is often made to inform and illustrate a subject. It may also need to include important information such as where, when and at what time? Further details such as telephone, address and web site details may need to be included.

With this information as a guide students should now be able to develop a poster or series of posters as their completed project.

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Part 2.3 – Design a video documentary to tell the story of an ancient tree in your district for use on a web site

Activity

Produce a video documentary to tell the story of an ancient tree in your district for use on a web site.

This part of the lesson would be ideal to link in with an English lesson on video production when writing the script and the Music department for recording the sound track background music.

Students have already taken video on the outdoor session so should now have a good selection of tapes to work with. They can also use the drawings and still photographs taken at the time by scanning these and preparing digital stills that can be inserted into the editing program.

Research and careful planning are essential in producing a video. The students need to work together to ensure that all aspects of the production are covered. Appoint different students to carry out the roles of editing, sound engineering, sound effect's, script writing, visual design and graphics, photography and additional video camera work.

The first job is to log the clips so that you have a list of the most suitable material. Once students have an idea of the existing material they can begin to see what is required to improve the project.

It will help to write down the clips and the duration and create a storyboard so that students can plan the script. Work out the lengths of each clip and gauge how much time is needed to add music and voice over. By planning this they can see whether they need to include more visuals.

Students need to build a sequence and create a story. If the clips do not have sufficient logic or information they can record a voice over to add to the soundtrack. For this they should play back the edits and time the sequences as

Resources Part 2.3

Notes, photographs and sketches from outdoor session Part 1

Video camera and tapes

Computer and editing software

Script and notes

Sound clips and background music

described in the previous paragraph and then script the voice over. The voice over can then be read in a quiet room with no extraneous noise using a good microphone and recorder. Add an extra sound track to your edit program and add the voice. By careful mixing this can then play over the rest of the visuals with some ambient sound mixed in from the original recordings.

They may also want to add extra sound effects and music. Use of music is copyright protected so this may be an opportunity to involve the music department and compose students own soundtrack. Other sounds such as birds singing or wind rustling in leaves can probably be obtained over the Internet or by recording your own.

A good book on video editing will be very useful to learn more about the complex art of editing as this lesson structure is only designed to give ideas and develop concepts.

Keep this video to about 5 – 10 minutes duration, as students will later need to compress the finished production so that it can be used on a web site.

This part of the lesson is more of an experiment as unless you have available some good software they will need to keep this project fairly simple. If students can manage to record the story and produce a simple edit and keep the message they set out to achieve then they will have done well. To compress this for your web site you will need to again source suitable compression software. The Pro version of Apple's Quicktime costs about £20 and can do the job quite well.

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Part 2.4 – Design a web site to promote Ancient Trees and to illustrate the magazine, poster and video clip.

Activity

Students should use the information from Part 1 and the work compiled in the other projects in Part 2 to build a set of web pages.

Students using a web design program build 3–6 pages to display the story of your tree along with the posters images, magazine article and video.

They may want to add the pages to the school web site or maybe just design the pages and use them locally just as an experiment in building the web site.

If it is the school web site then the template for the navigation will already be established and they will just be adding some content pages. If starting from scratch then they will have to build the navigation as well. Again this knowledge will have to assume as existing already. The job then is to layout the pages so that they are easy to navigate and simple to understand.

It is worth students studying a range of web sites and seeing which work best, give a clear message yet are also exciting to look at.

Simple things are usually best letting the story and pictures make up the interesting parts.

A web site is a bit like designing a page in a magazine from a layout point of view but the navigation is different. There may be 20 links on a web page to numerous other pages which is why the navigation needs to be easy to follow otherwise you could get lost in a big web site.

Try starting with a home page with an introduction to their ancient tree and a small poster that links to another page on the posters. Do the same thing for the video and the

Resources Part 2.4

Notes, photographs and sketches from outdoor session
Part 1

Digital media

Scanner

Computer with web design software

Finished video clip (compressed for web)

magazine article. Try using drawings, photographs and text to make the pages interesting. Remember that image files need to be made the size they are finally used on the page and that they need to be suitably compressed, usually in jpg format or gifs for limited colour range.

Design and layout need to be simple and dynamic, lots of text will put people off reading it as they tend to want to click around on a web site looking for something that interests them so keep text short and illustrations small. These can be linked to other pages with more information if they choose to read more.

Students will now have produced several pages including the home page on their ancient tree and completed this stage of the project.

Please ensure you have full parental permissions if any of the students are featured on a live web site.

Think about how this project could be continued:

It may well be that working with other departments such as Drama, Music, Science, English and History that themes can be developed to extend these ideas further.

Recordings could become a play with actors, stage design and historical references.

Posters could become an exhibition in the local library.

Magazine articles could become a school magazine or could be sent to a commercial magazine or the local newspaper.



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