

The SEL Interactive Read Aloud Collection

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

The Tree by Neal Layton

Self-Awareness (understanding emotions, recognizing the impact of actions)

Self-Management (responding to challenges with empathy and problem-solving)

Social Awareness (appreciating nature, understanding the needs of others)

Relationship Skills (working together, making fair choices)

Responsible Decision-Making (thinking about consequences and making ethical choices)

Background

The Tree is a heartwarming and simple story about the importance of nature and kindness. A group of humans decide to build a home, but they don't realize that the tree they plan to cut down is home to many animals. Once they understand the impact of their actions, they work together to find a solution that benefits both humans and wildlife. This book promotes environmental awareness, empathy, and problem-solving.

Before You Read

Look at the cover—what do you notice about the tree? What animals do you see?

Why do you think trees are important? Who or what depends on trees to live?

Have you ever had to share something with others? How did it make you feel?

What do you think might happen if someone wanted to take down a tree where animals live?

What are some ways people and nature can live together peacefully?

While You Read

Guiding Questions

(Self-Awareness) How do the animals feel when they are living in the tree at the beginning of the story?

(Responsible Decision-Making) What do the humans want to do when they see the tree? Why do they think it's a good idea?

(Social Awareness) Why is the tree important to the animals? What would happen if it were cut down?

(Self-Management) How do the animals react when the tree is damaged? How do you think they feel?

The SEL Interactive Read Aloud Collection

	<p>(Relationship Skills) What do the humans do when they realize what they've done? Why is this an important moment in the story?</p> <p>(Responsible Decision-Making) What other choices could the humans make instead of cutting down the tree?</p> <p>(Social Awareness) How does the new house in the tree show that people and animals can share space?</p> <p>(Self-Awareness) How do the humans feel when they find a solution that helps everyone?</p> <p>(Relationship Skills) Why is it important to think about how our actions affect other living things?</p> <p>(Responsible Decision-Making) What can we do in our own communities to take care of nature and animals?</p>
After Reading	<p>K-2 Activity: "Build a Home for Everyone" Craft</p> <p>Objective: Students will design a shared space where humans and animals can live together peacefully.</p> <p>Activity Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discussion: Talk about how people and animals can share the environment. What do animals need? What do people need?2. Craft: Give students paper, markers, and materials to design a home that includes space for nature (e.g., a house with a treehouse, a garden with bird feeders).3. Sharing: Students present their designs to the class, explaining how their idea helps both people and animals.4. Reflection: Ask, "How can we help nature in real life?" <p>3-5 Activity: "Nature Problem-Solving" Discussion & Writing</p> <p>Objective: Students will brainstorm real-world ways to protect the environment while considering human needs.</p> <p>Activity Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discussion: Ask students to think about challenges where nature and people are in conflict (e.g., deforestation, pollution, urban expansion).2. Problem-Solving: In small groups, students brainstorm solutions that allow both nature and people to thrive (e.g., planting trees in cities, protecting animal habitats).

The SEL Interactive Read Aloud Collection

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Writing Prompt: “Write a letter to a local leader with an idea for how people can protect nature in our community.”4. Classroom Connection: Collect the letters and discuss how students can take action, such as creating a class project to support local wildlife.
--	---