

Old Elm Speaks: Tree Poems

by Kristine O'Connell George

A collection of poems that children will love to discover and dream about ways trees can help them play, learn, grow and create.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *Do you think a tree can really talk?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder how that little girl got in the tree?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Old Elm Speaks: Tree Poems* – First 10 poems

- velveteen: a brushed, soft fabric resembling velvet
- satchel: a bag for carrying things
- perched: a place that a bird can land on and rest
- valise: a small suitcase
- slender: small in width, limited
- wheelbarrow: a container with wheels and a handle
- mulch: a protective covering of materials laid over the soil
- delicious: delightful, pleasing and good to eat
- gazing: to look for a long time in one direction
- elegance: graceful, stylish and having good taste
- heron: a freshwater wading bird with long neck
- reflection: a reflected image of somebody or something
- commuters: something that regularly travels over the same distant and direction
- unfurled: to unroll or spread out
- stream: a small, narrow and shallow river
- mossy: covered and overgrown with moss
- soggy: soaked through with moisture
- gnawed: to chew at something and reduce it gradually
- architectural: a specific design and creation
- scheme: a secret plot or plan of action
- helicoptered: something that can hover and move vertically as well as horizontally
- hovered: to float in the air
- dizziness: to be unsteady, loss of balance
- aloft: upward, high up or in a higher position

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions... (The questions below are for the first 10 poems of the book)

Oak's Introduction

Who was talking, the tree or the boy?
What question did the tree ask the boy?

Bud

What color was the satchel?
What popped out of the valise?

Hide and Go Seek

Who was playing hide-and-go-seek?
Where did the little sister want to hide?
Could her brother see her? What could he see?

Celebration

What gifts did the boy bring the tree?
What was the boy celebrating?

Miss Willow

What was the willow tree doing?
What bird came and landed beside the willow tree?
What did the bird land in the middle of?

Tree Traffic

What kind of animal was in the tree?
Why were the squirrels getting in each other's way?

Bridge

What were the kids walking on?
What was the log covered in?
Describe what the crossing looked like.

No Breakfast

What animal was walking through the woods?
Why did the deer leave?

Beaver Dam

What was laying in a pile?
What color were the tree's limbs?
Who do you think made the dam?

Maple Shoot in the Pumpkin Patch

What was growing in the pumpkin patch?
How did the maple tree get there?
Do you think a maple tree can grow in a pumpkin patch? Why or why not?

Do

Rhyme Time

After reading a poem, go through and locate all the rhyming words. For example, in *Hide and Go Seek*, see, tree and knee all rhyme. Ask the children to come up with other words that rhyme with the words in the poem. Write the words on a board and talk about why the words rhyme. If desired, complete this activity with other poems in the book.