



# The Lorax

## **Adventures in Reading:**

*Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets*

### **Contents:**

- Two books - one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey



## for teachers and librarians



*This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about trees, appropriate for a first or second grade level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.*

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of suggested alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The featured books are **The Lorax** by Dr. Seuss and the nonfiction book **Tell Me, Tree** by Gail Gibbons. **The Lorax** tells the story of how the greedy Uncle-ler hacks down Truffula trees in order to make Thneeds, a rather frivolous item that he believes everyone needs. The Lorax disagrees and tries to reason with the Once-ler to get him to see the consequences of his actions on the environment, but is ignored and the Lorax himself must flee when all is destroyed. In **Tell Me, Tree**, we learn how to identify different kinds of trees as well as the parts of a tree, inside and out. The book also discusses the important roles trees play in our lives.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize, instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and nonfiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> Creativity Activity: a hands-on craft project
- >> Imagination Activity: encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> Get real Activity: focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

### Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> Two books — one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> Parent information sheet
- >> Three themed activity pages
- >> Bookmark
- >> Survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you.

Let Reading Rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website: [www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact](http://www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact). Click on "Family Literacy Bags"

## ADVENTURES IN READING!

# Welcome

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere — not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about \_\_\_\_\_ was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> Two books to share with your child
- >> Three related activities
- >> Bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- >> Short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by \_\_\_\_\_.

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Teacher signature*

**To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)**

# ADVENTURES IN READING!

# Instructions

## *How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet*

### Getting ready

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction — a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

### Start the fun

3. When you know you’ll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child — can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. Take time to ask and answer questions, explore the pictures, and wonder what will happen next. Read it again, if your child asks you to. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

4. When you read the nonfiction book, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The first book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book is about real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child’s interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

### When you’re done...

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child’s school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning — and reading — too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

### Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don’t be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don’t have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

### Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don’t need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*



# get in line

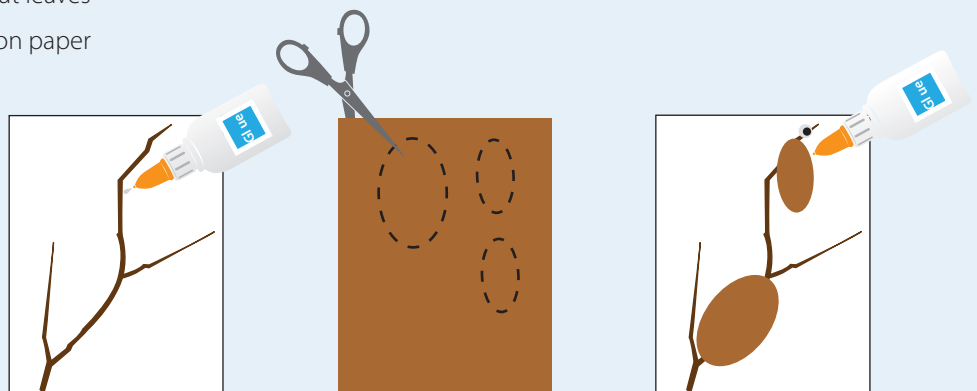
Line is one of the very basic ingredients of art. In *The Lorax*, the Truffula trees drawn by Dr. Seuss are typical of what he thought a child's idea of art was: "pen-and-ink outlines filled in with flat color, with no modulation or subtlety... that's the way kids see things."

And it is not just in art that kids and adults may see things that way. Trees in nature often especially look like flat lines, but in reality, a tree and its branches have volume, texture, and shape.

In this activity, your child will create a work of art that plays with lines using small branches or twigs. Taking a nature walk will offer inspiration and some of the raw materials your child will need to turn a branch or twig into a found object and paper collage.

## Supplies:

- >> Twigs or small branches (gathered off the ground, not broken from a tree) without leaves
- >> White and colored construction paper
- >> Glue
- >> Scissors
- >> Tape
- >> Pencil, pen or marker



## Getting Started

As you read either *The Lorax*, *Tell Me, Tree* or another tree-related title, pay attention to the pictures of trees and how lines of all kinds are used to make them. Some trees have straight lines, some have curved and some even have broken lines. Talk with your child about how these lines express mood or feeling, whether it is the bent and broken lines of trees that show sadness of the destroyed Truffula forest or the wavy lines of the healthy Truffula trees that show movement and life.

After reading, head outside to meet a tree (See Get Real Activity: Tree Hugger). Talk with your child about how this tree looks compared to the trees he's seen in books. Then look for twigs and small branches that are straight, bent, twisted or curved that will fit on your construction paper. Don't break any from the tree. Remove any leaves from your branches.

## Lining Things Up

Have your child sort through his branches and twigs. Have him place them in different combinations on the white paper. Talk with him about what these "lines" could represent in a picture. They could be trees or Chinese language characters. By adding other shapes, they could turn into anything — a person dancing, a computer mouse, or a deer or other animal.

Once your child has decided what the branch could be, have him tape or glue it to the paper. Then encourage him to use colored construction paper to create shapes to help finish his picture, such as leaves for his tree, a computer to go with his mouse, or a face for his dancer or animal.

## tree hugger



Have you ever really looked at a tree? Just like no two people and no two snowflakes, no two trees are exactly alike.

Ask your child about trees he may be familiar with, such as those growing in your yard, at school or at the park. What has he noticed about the tree? Is it very tall? Is it a home for birds and squirrels? Does it have leaves or needles?

Now put his powers of observation to the test. Head outside to get up close and personal with a tree. Encourage exploring with all senses (though only use taste if the tree has edible fruits or nuts) and from many different angles (even lying on the ground looking up). Help your child with words to describe his tree. Is the bark smooth or rough? Are the leaves broad or thin? Are the edges of the leaves smooth or toothed? Do the branches creak or the leaves rustle? Your tree might also look different during different parts of the day or night. Pay a nocturnal visit too if you can.

In *Tell Me, Tree*, Gail Gibbons offers some ideas for how kids can record their observations about trees to share with others by making their own tree identification book. If you and your child have read this title, you may want to bring paper, pencil and crayons to make drawings and leaf and bark rubbings as part of your tree observation.

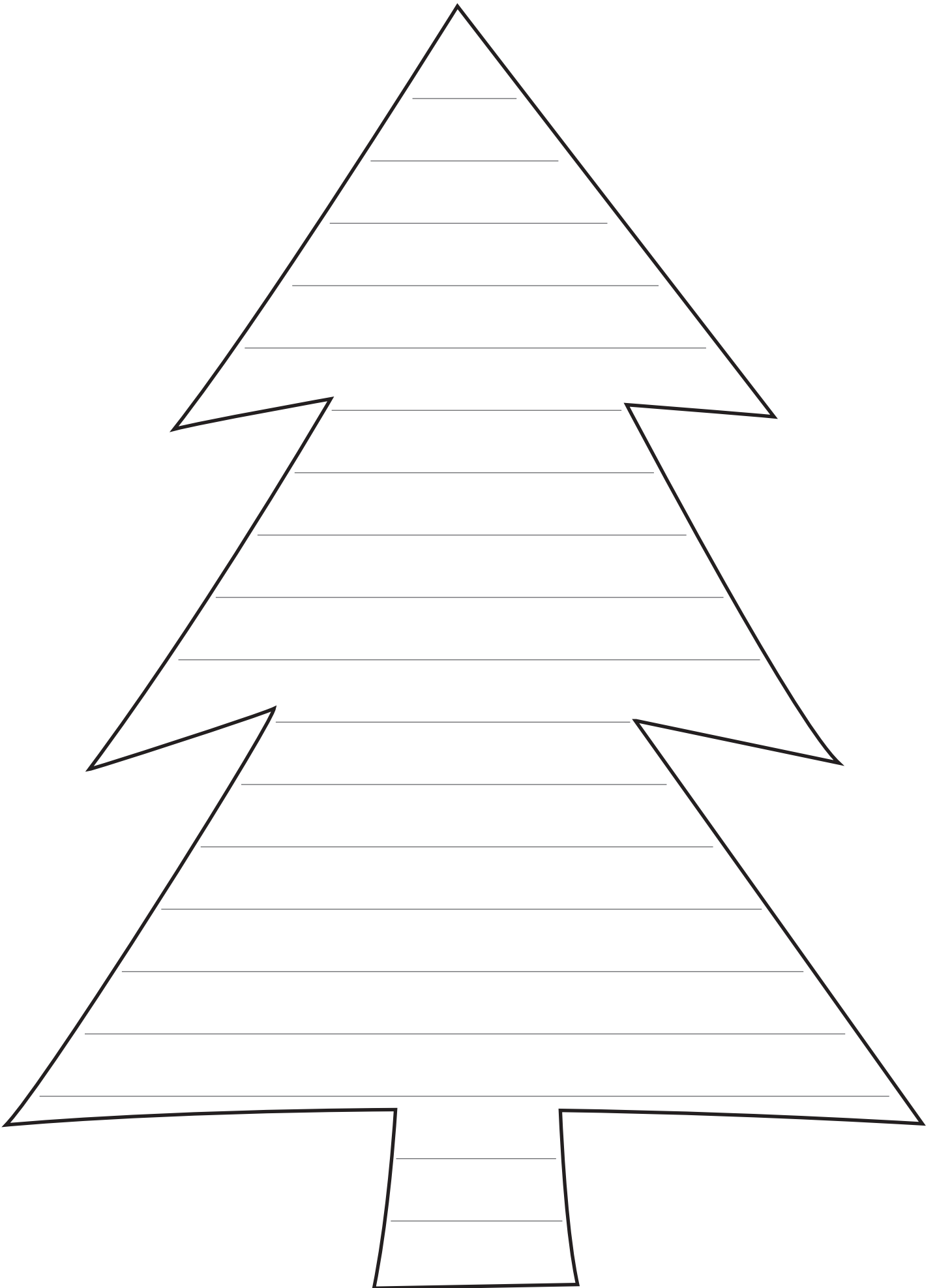
If you want to learn more about identifying trees, *Tell Me, Tree* can help you name many common ones. For others, look for a good field guide to trees at the library or bookstore or visit *What Tree is That? Online Edition* at [www.arborday.org/trees/whattree/fullonline.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/trees/whattree/fullonline.cfm).

### What wood we do without trees?

Like the Once-ler, kids often don't realize that our natural resources are not unlimited. Your child also may not be aware of all the important roles trees play in our lives. Trees provide oxygen and help prevent erosion. They offer protection and homes for many animals. And they provide an incredible number of products we use every day.

Talk with your child about what comes from trees. Use the enclosed sheet to make a list together. See how many things you can come up with. For fun, compare your answers with those at [www.idahoforests.org/wood\\_you.htm](http://www.idahoforests.org/wood_you.htm).

In *The Lorax*, your child can see what happens in a world without trees. Talk about what if we didn't have trees. What would we do?





# if these trees could talk

"I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees." Since trees can't talk, the Lorax was speaking on their behalf, sharing his concern and dismay at the Once-ler for chopping down a Truffula tree.

But what if trees could talk for themselves? What would the tree in your backyard or at school or on the street corner have to say?

Perhaps your tree would like to talk about its history. Do you know how old the tree is? It's hard to know a tree's age until it is cut down and you can count the growth rings. If you know someone who might know when it was planted or first began to grow, ask about it. Otherwise the resources at [www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/leaf/HowOld.html](http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/leaf/HowOld.html) can help you and your child measure and use math to estimate tree age.

Once you have an idea about the age of the tree, you and your child can talk about what significant events have taken place during the tree's life. These could be world events or family milestones. Maybe the tree remembers the day you moved into your house. Or the tree might have a funny story to tell about the time your child tried to climb it. Let your child pretend to be the tree and tell the tree's story. He can write and illustrate the story or dictate it to you.

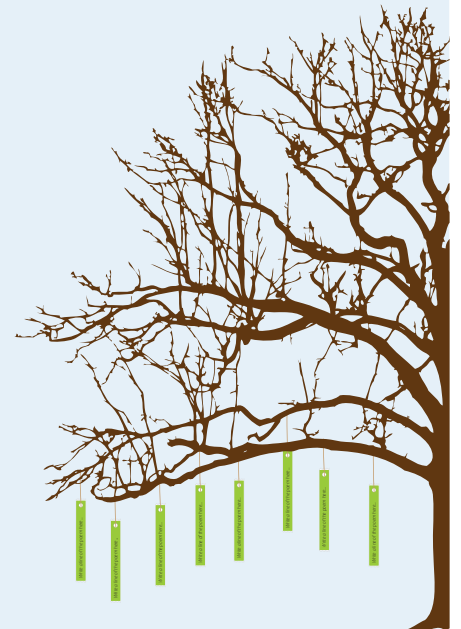
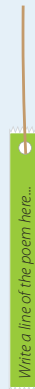
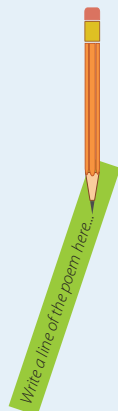
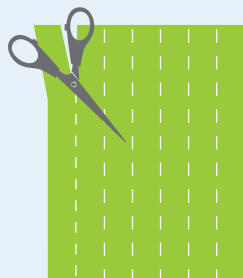
If you have an audio or video recording device, let your child record the tree's story then listen to it together outside with your tree. You could even invite others to "listen to the tree" if you secure your recorder in the tree and play it for an audience.

## Make a poetree

Here's another way to speak for the trees — make a poetree! A poetree can start with a favorite poem or a poem that your child writes himself.

### Supplies:

- >> White and colored construction paper
- >> Scissors
- >> Single-hole punch
- >> Yarn or twist ties
- >> Clear packing tape
- >> Pen or marker



This work of art and literature is best for a small tree with low branches that many people will walk by and see. It is most effective when leaves are off the tree.

First, have your child find or write his poem. Next, cut strips of white or colored paper the same width as your packing tape. Have your child copy one line of poetry on each strip. Then cover each strip with packing tape. Let your child use the hole punch to make a hole at the horizontal top of the strip in the center. Then thread the yarn or twist ties through the holes. Hang the poem on the tree and invite readers to stop by. By using different colors of construction paper, your child or friends and family members could also add additional poems to the poetree.





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## Featured titles

### Fiction

*The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss

### Nonfiction

*Tell Me, Tree* by Gail Gibbons

### Additional fiction titles

*The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest* by Lynne Cherry

*Old Elm Speaks: Tree Poems* by Kristine O'Connell George; illustrated by Kate Kiesler

*Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf* by Lois Ehlert

*Someday a Tree* by Eve Bunting; illustrated by Ronald Himler

### Additional nonfiction titles

*Be a Friend to Trees* by Patricia Lauber; illustrated by Holly Keller

*Crinkleroot's Guide to Knowing the Trees* by Jim Arnosky

*I Can Name 50 Trees Today! All About Trees* by Bonnie Worth

*A Tree Is Growing* by Arthur Dorros; illustrated by S.D. Schindler

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