

# The Giving Tree

**Subject:** Language Arts

**Duration:** 1-2 class periods

**Location:** Classroom / Outdoors

**Key Vocabulary:** Biography, nutrients, fungi, decompose, carbon dioxide, oxygen, adaptations, fire-resistant, prop roots

**Related Activities:** Celebrity of the Slough; Pineland Invaders; The Lorax Activity; Leaf Hunt

**Florida Sunshine State Standards:** LA.B.1.2



**Objectives.** The student will be able to: a) state two reasons which explain the benefits of trees in the natural environment, and b) develop a biography of a chosen tree in a natural environment.

**Method.** The students will read a short story about the benefits of trees. They will choose a tree in the natural environment and write a biography of that tree.

**Background.** Trees are very important to us, yet they often go unappreciated. A living tree creates shade; serves as a home for insects and small animals; serves as support for air plants and ferns (if the bark is rough enough); returns nutrients to the soil when its leaves fall; removes carbon dioxide from the air; and releases oxygen into the air so that animals can breathe. A dead tree provides food for fungi, insects and other decomposers. Eventually the dead tree will become part of the soil and provide nutrients for new seedlings. Our environment requires trees, and we must take the time to notice their importance!

## Materials

- A copy of the story “The Giving Tree” by Shel Silverstein. Published by Harper and Rowe Junior Books, Division of Harper Rowe Publishers, NY. It is available at your local library, ISBN 0-06-025666-4.
- Blackline master - “Biography of a Tree”
- Colored pencils

## Suggested Procedure

1. Take your class outside under a large tree (if possible). Read the short story, The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein, with your students.
2. Discuss how the tree in the story gave of itself. Ask the students how trees give of themselves in their natural environment.
3. Tell the students that they will be writing a biography of a tree of their choice.
4. Distribute the blackline master, “Biography of a Tree,” to each student. Tell the students that they will be given the opportunity to select a tree in their environment. They will use the blackline master to write a biography about their tree.

5. The “Biography of a Tree” blackline master has labeled sections to help students organize their thoughts. Each section is listed below with a description or example. Review the sections with your students beforehand. Encourage students to be both accurate and creative in writing their tree biographies.

6. Example: “Biography of a Tree”

**IDENTIFICATION:** Write the name (what kind) of tree it is.

**BIRTH PLACE:** The place where their tree is living (i.e.. Big Cypress National Preserve).

**AGE:** Tell if it is young, old, dead (dead trees are very important).

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Draw a picture of the bark, leaves, and seed of the tree.

**SPECIAL ADAPTATIONS:** Special adaptations are characteristics that help a tree survive in its environment. Three examples are the fire-resistant bark of the slash pine, the protruding roots (or “knees”) of the cypress, and the ability of the gumbo limbo tree to create new trees from branches or stems.

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO ITS ENVIRONMENT:** See background.

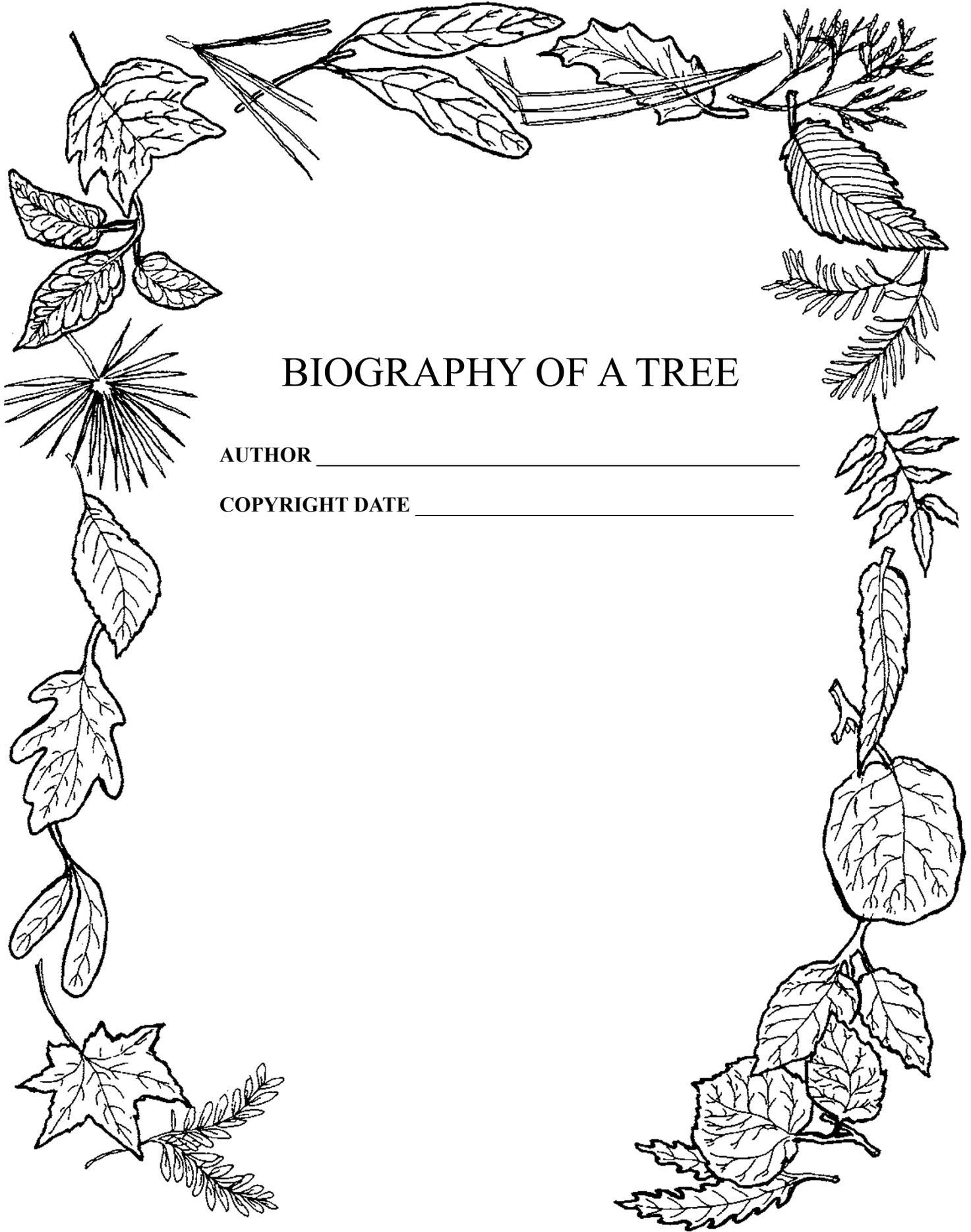
**WHY I CHOSE THIS TREE:** Describe why they chose this tree over all others.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Draw an illustration of their tree.

## Evaluation

Have the students share their biographies with each other. Place special emphasis on what contributions the tree has made to its environment and why each student chose their particular tree.

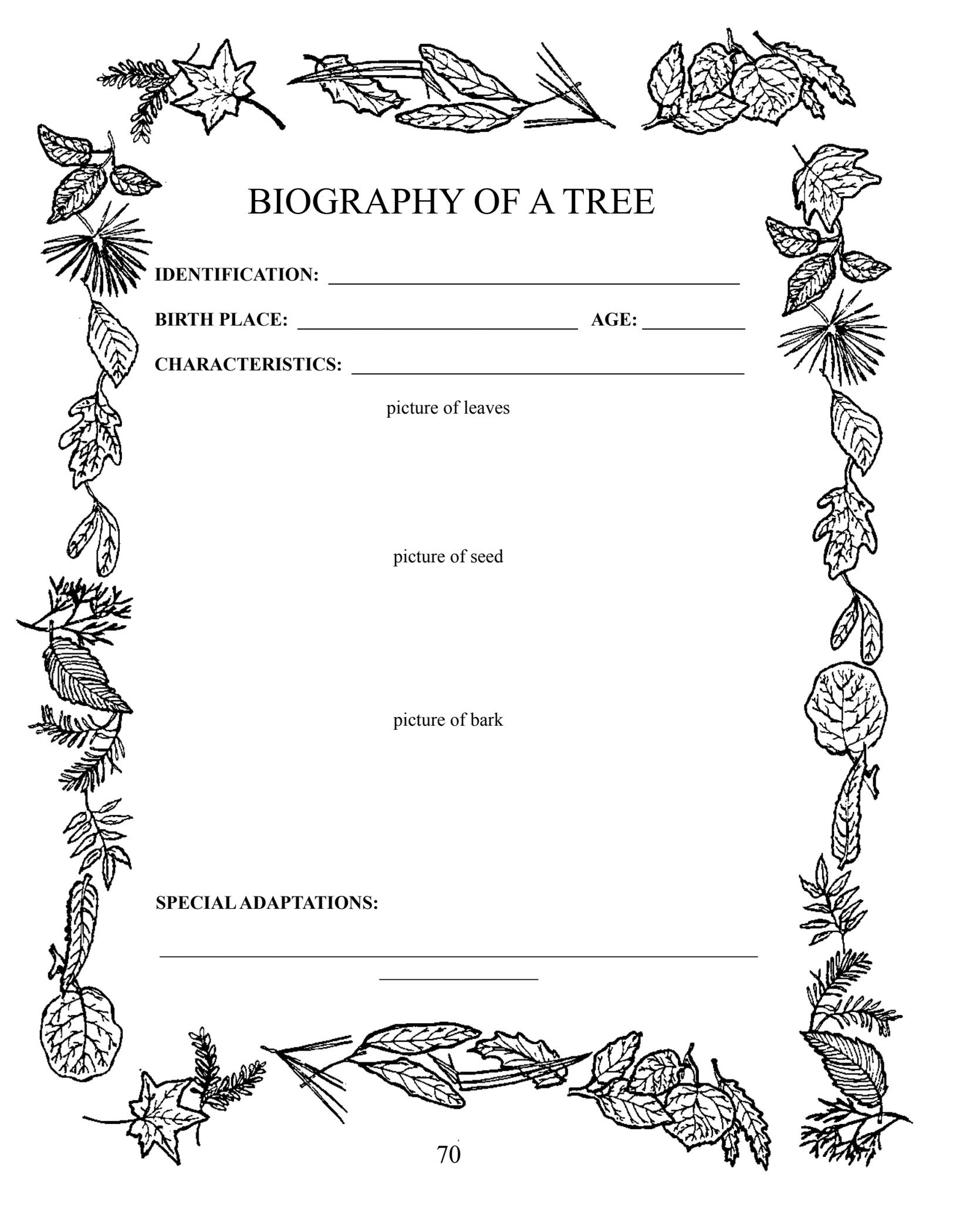




# BIOGRAPHY OF A TREE

AUTHOR \_\_\_\_\_

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# BIOGRAPHY OF A TREE

IDENTIFICATION: \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTH PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTERISTICS: \_\_\_\_\_

picture of leaves

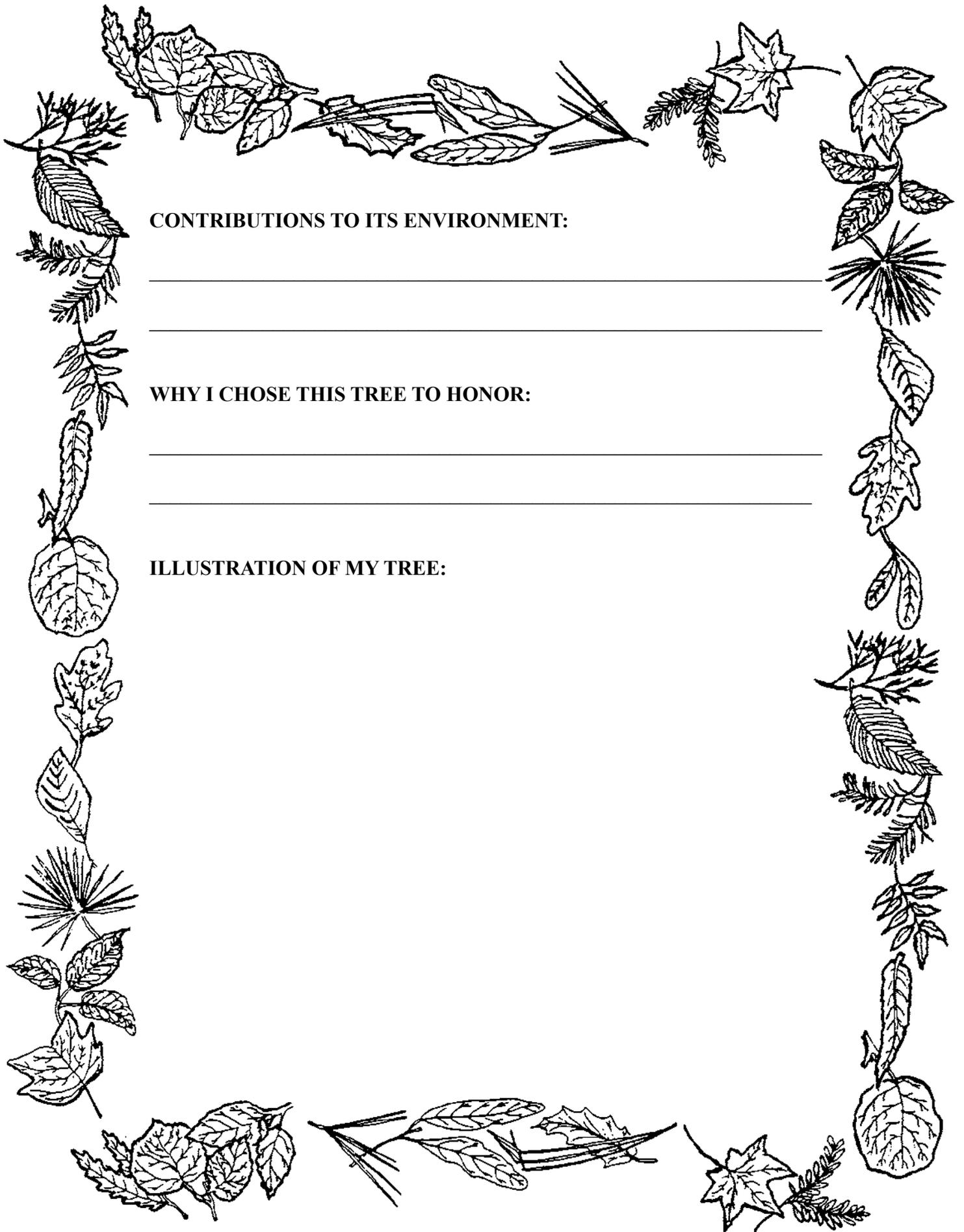
picture of seed

picture of bark

SPECIAL ADAPTATIONS:

\_\_\_\_\_

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**CONTRIBUTIONS TO ITS ENVIRONMENT:**

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**WHY I CHOSE THIS TREE TO HONOR:**

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**ILLUSTRATION OF MY TREE:**