

Botanical illustration

Overview: Students will choose a leaf, learn to observe and draw it, match a leaf to the original plant, and challenge others to match a real leaf with a drawing.

Prep

Select an outdoor area that students will draw in. In the immediate area around that space, pick a single leaf off of as many trees and plant species as you can find¹. (Older students can do this prep work themselves.). For example, you may pick one leaf from each of the following species: oak, maple, elm, boxelder, sumac, clover, garlic mustard, burdock, etc.

Materials for each student

- 1 leaf
- Clipboard
- White paper
- Scotch tape
- Color pencils
- Ruler

Activity

1. Go over leaf parts with students, using these vocabulary words:
 - Blade, apex, petiole, margin, base, primary vein,
 - lateral vein, sinus, lobe
2. Tell each student to draw their leaf as carefully as they can, observing:
 - Color, Texture, Shape, Patterns
 - Measurements & proportions with ruler (optional)
3. Give students time to draw. If it's windy, tape the leaf to the paper. Students should label parts clearly and provide at least 2 measurements with proper labels (cm or inches).
4. Challenge students to find the parent plant their leaf came from. Students can then further label their drawing to describe the plant (type, location, estimated height, etc.)
5. Collect all papers and leaves.
6. Redistribute leaves, making sure each student has a different leaf.
7. Lay out drawings. Challenge students to find the matching drawing.
8. Tell students to collect their drawing and their original leaf, tape the specimen to the back of their drawing, and write their name on the work.

Optional: Students can use a leaf press to preserve their work.

¹ If poison ivy or nettles are in the area, mark them off and avoid them.

Parts of a Leaf

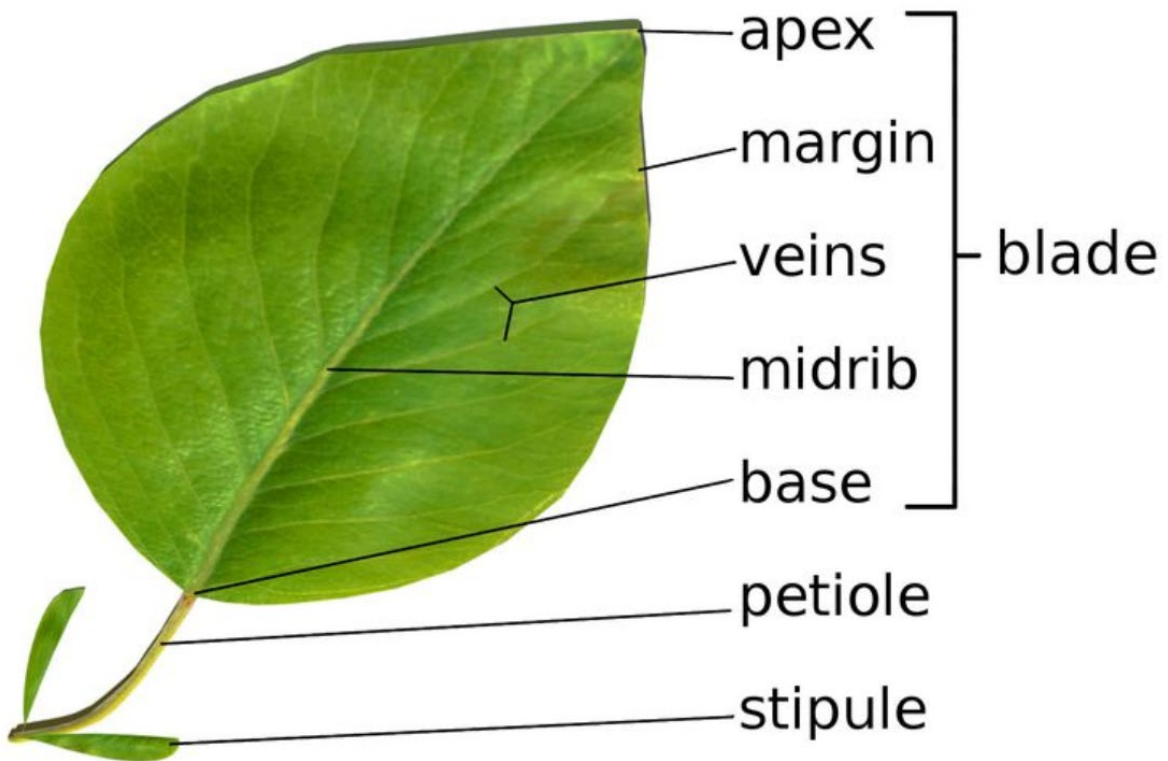


Image from Georgia 4-H

Scoring rubric

	1	2	3
Leaf parts labeled			
Measurements accurate			
Measurements labeled			
Neatness			