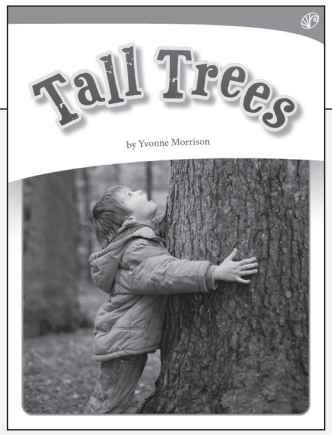

Tall Trees

by Yvonne Morrison

Book Summary

This book describes how some small redwood seeds grow into tall trees and how some animals nest in them. The book also features some other record-breaking trees from around the world.

Themes

Earth science, Environment, Habitats, Plants

Features of the Book

- The information contained in the photographs, text, captions, fact boxes, diagram
- Anchor words for discussion: *seed, soil, redwood, world, plants, animals, environment*
- Phonics and phonemic awareness: ee (*trees, treetops, seed, needles, been, need*)

Strategies

Tall Trees introduces and reinforces the following strategies:

- making connections
- finding main ideas
- questioning

Materials

- copies of the BM, pencils

Introducing the Text

Begin by asking the students if they have been to a forest or a place where lots of tall trees grow. Talk about how some of the tallest trees on Earth are hundreds and even thousands of years old.

Reading the Text

Ensure each student has a copy of the text. Make sure that the anchor words (*seed, soil, redwood, world, plants, animals, environment*) are integrated naturally into the discussion. An understanding of these terms will help the students appreciate the author's purpose. Encourage the students to use the information in the photographs and text to determine the strategies of making connections, finding main ideas and questioning as you work through the book.

Cover

Together, read the book's title and the name of the author. Point to the photograph and say *Have you ever seen a tree that is so wide that you couldn't wrap your arms around it?* (Answers will vary.) Together, read aloud the preview question on the back cover: How big is the tallest tree? Explain to the students that the tallest flowering tree is found in Australia. Say *Let's read the book to find out more about some other amazing tree facts.*

Contents Page

Turn to the Contents page and point to the photograph of the children climbing the tree. Explain to the students that a Contents page appears at the start of a book. It lists each section of the book and tells you which page the section starts on. Read the text on the Contents page with the students.

Page 2

Read the heading with the students. Talk about how seeds come in all shapes and sizes. Ask the students to share some of their experiences with seeds. Encourage them to think about seeds inside fruits and vegetables, as well as seeds that come in cones, such as pine cones. Read the text with the students. Pause at the bolded words seed and grain. Have the students provide a definition for these two words. Then turn to page 12 to check their responses. Point to the bolded word redwood and explain that this word can also be found in the glossary on page 12. Have the students turn to the glossary at the back of the book and read the definition for the word redwood (a giant conifer tree with thick bark). Explain to the students that a conifer is an evergreen tree that produces cones. Now read the caption together. Ask the students if they have ever held an avocado seed or a mango seed in their hands. Have them think about how different these seeds are compared with a tiny redwood seed.

Page 3

Point to the photograph and tell the students that this is a tall redwood tree. Ask if any of the students have ever seen a redwood tree in real life. Read the body copy text with the students and then read the caption. Say *Let's read on to find out where redwood trees come from.*

Pages 4-5

Point to the picture of the redwood cones. Encourage the students to share any experiences they may have had with cones, such as collecting pine cones in a forest or throwing pine cones on a fire. Together, read the body copy text and caption on page 4. Spend some time talking about the diagram that shows the size comparison of the Eiffel Tower, a redwood tree, a giraffe and a human. With the students, read the heading and body copy text on page 5. Pause to discuss the fact about the 23 giraffes. Have the students try to imagine what 23 giraffes standing on top of each other would look like. Then have the students read aloud

the caption. You could discuss what might happen if the exact location of the tallest tree went viral on social media.

Page 6

Point to the picture and ask the students what they think this page is going to be about (animals that live in trees). Read the heading together to confirm the students' predictions. Then have the students read the body copy text aloud. Lastly, ask the students if they know what kind of bird is in the photograph, and then read the caption to check their responses.

Page 7

Point to the photograph of the car driving through the tree and read the heading together. Ask the students if they have ever seen anything like this in real life or in magazines and books. Say *What does this tell us about some trees?* (They are very wide as well as tall.) Together, read the body copy text and caption with the students. Discuss the information that is on the tree sign in the photograph, such as its name, height, diameter, age and location. This is an ideal time to talk about the strategy of questioning. Explain that we often ask questions before, during and after reading a book. Allow time for the students to ask any questions that they might have about the Chandelier tree. For example: *How did it get its name? How was the hole through the tree made?* and so on. You could write these questions on the board or on paper so that you can revisit and research them at a later time.

Pages 8-9

Point to the photograph of the image of the world map made from trees and read the heading to the students. Ask them if they know the four countries where the four arrows are pointing to (United States, Mexico, Sweden, Australia). Discuss how the author has set this spread out using record-breaking facts, such as the tallest tree, the widest tree, the oldest tree and the tallest flowering tree. Then read all the caption text with the students. Talk about how questions often pop in your mind as you read. For instance, say *When I read about the oldest tree in Sweden, I wondered how they could tell it was nearly 10,000 years old. Let's read on to see if the author tells us more about identifying the age of trees.*

Page 10

Explain to the students that as you read, it is important to keep the main idea of the page in mind. Tell the students that other ideas on the page often tell more about the main idea and that these are called supporting details. Have the students read the text with you, then ask them what the main idea of the page is. (Trees have growth rings inside their trunks.) Ask the students to tell you what the supporting details are. (You count the rings to tell how old a tree is. Some trees live for thousands of years.)

Page 11

Have the students reading the heading. Talk about the photograph. Explain to the students that it is important to learn about the trees and protect many of them. Tell them that a person who studies plants is called a botanist. Together, read the text. Encourage the students to ask questions that may have sprung to mind as they read, such as *Why are all trees important to the environment?*

Page 12

Look at the glossary. Ask the students what they notice about the glossary. (It is in alphabetical order.) Tell the students that a glossary explains the meaning of technical or specialised words and phrases used in a book. Cover the meanings of the words. Ask the students to provide a definition for each word. (Answers will vary.) Then compare the students' responses with the definitions that the author provided.

Revisiting the Text

- Skim-read the text again. Now imagine that you are a park ranger at the Redwood National Park in California, USA., and that you are giving a group of students a talk about redwoods in the park. Write a short speech. Weave some facts about redwoods into the speech. Use the book to help you.
- Write the word *trees* on the board or on chart paper. Explain that ee is a vowel digraph. A digraph is a pair of letters that makes one single sound. A vowel is any of the following letters: *a, e, i, o, u*. Ask the students to find other words that contain the vowel digraph ee in the book (*treetops, seed, needles, been, need*). Then brainstorm a list of other words that contain ee vowel digraphs (*freeze, see, free, teeth, bee, feet, green, sweet, street*, etc).

Following Up

- Research three more tree or plant record-breakers and present the information how the author did. Think about where the plants are located and the fact that makes them unique. For instance, you might do the plant with the largest seed or largest flower or the tree with the deepest roots.
- Give the students copies of the BM for this title. They can write a question they still have and then research and write the answer to it.