



Kenzie's Little Tree

Teacher Guide



About the book

On a summer visit to the garden store, Kenzie picks out a tree for her family's backyard and promises to take care of it. It seems delicate, just like her mom, who doesn't always feel well. Through the seasons, the tree sways in the wind and weather, and her mom's health has its ups and downs. When a winter storm hits, Kenzie worries about her little tree, but she soon discovers that it is stronger than it looks — just like her mom, and just like Kenzie.



About the author

Alison McGauley is a special education teacher, author and mom. As a person living with multiple chronic illnesses, Alison is passionate about writing stories that speak to children and caregivers who are impacted by illness or disability. *Kenzie's Little Tree* is Alison's debut picture book. When she's not teaching, reading or writing, Alison enjoys family adventures and being surrounded by trees in local forests and trails. She resides in Ontario with her partner, two daughters and ragdoll cat.

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the changes in Kenzie's world?
2. What are some of the ways that Mom and the little tree are similar?
3. Why does Kenzie get so upset about the little tree being out in the cold night?
4. List Kenzie's family adventures. Which of these adventures sound the most fun? What's your family's favorite activity?
5. Kenzie feels like she needs to take care of the little tree. Have you ever helped something or someone? How did that make you feel?
6. Who is telling the story? How would it change if it were from a different point of view?
7. What is the main idea in this story? Why do you think this?
8. What are you wondering before, during and after reading the story?
9. What do you think it would be like to live with a parent who is often sick? How did your opinion change after you read *Kenzie's Little Tree*?
10. What type of picture book is this? How do you know?
11. What is the problem in the story? How is it solved?
12. How does the illustration of Kenzie placing rocks around the tree help you to better understand what is happening? How does it help you to understand Kenzie's feelings?
13. The author used a lot of describing words and sensory details (the use of the five senses) in the story. Why do you think she did this?
14. What character traits would you give Kenzie? Why?




Science Lesson: Needs of Living Things, Grades K–3

Lesson Focus	The needs of living things
Lesson Objective	By the end of the lesson, students will know the six basic needs of living things (air, water, food, heat, shelter, space).
Expectations	<p>Ontario Curriculum: Grade 1 B2.2 – identify the basic needs of living things</p> <p>Grade 3: B2.1 – identify the basic needs of plants and threatening conditions</p> <p>United States NGSS: K-LS1-1, K-ESS3-1, 1-LS1-1, 2-LS2-1</p>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures for Introduction (pre-cut) • <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i> • Outdoor greenspace • Chart paper and marker • Student clipboards and paper and pencils or whiteboards • Small paper squares for student drawings
Introduction (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Draw something you want for your birthday.” Paste squares on one side of a t-chart labeled “Wants”. • Show the picture of produce. “Do you want these for your birthday?” Then, “Do you need these for a healthy body?” • Label the second column “Needs” and paste this photo. Do the same for the other pictures. • “All living things have important needs. Today you are going to observe plants and animals and make notes or drawings about what they need.”
Activities (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students make observations and notes. • In the classroom, invite students to share. Make a three-column chart with these headings: Animal Needs, Plant Needs, and Human Needs. Record the student-generated needs for animals and plants. • Based on prior knowledge and a picture walk of <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i>, record students’ ideas for Human Needs. • Notice the similarities in the lists.
Consolidation (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate these ideas into the six basic needs on chart paper. • Provide each student with another paper square and ask them to make an illustration of one of the basic needs so that you have illustrations to paste beside each of the needs on the chart. • Extension for Grade 3: Discuss how environmental conditions (snow, wind) threatened the little tree’s needs and generate other real-life examples of environmental threats to plants.

Science Lesson: Daily and Seasonal Changes, Grades K–1

Lesson Focus	Daily and seasonal changes
Lesson Objective	By the end of the lesson, students will know about some of the ways that seasonal changes affect living things and how living things respond to these changes.
Expectations	Ontario Curriculum: Grade 1 E1 – assess the impact of daily and seasonal changes on living things E2 – how living things respond to daily and seasonal changes United States NGSS: K-ESS2-1, K-ESS2-2, 1-LSI-1
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four large posters, each labeled with the name of one season; markers• Whiteboards and markers• <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i>
Introduction (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the weather for each of the four seasons.• Have students act out their favorite outdoor activity for each season (e.g., pretend to swim, build a snowman).
Activities (30–40 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split the class into four groups and assign a season to each.• Re-read <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i> while each student listens and makes mental or written notes/drawings about what people, plants and animals are doing in their assigned season.• In their groups, students discuss their notes and record their examples onto a large poster.• Back together, each group shares, and with teacher guidance, a few more points can be added to each poster (e.g., anything else already known about how living things are affected by and respond to seasonal changes).
Consolidation (5–10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place one poster in each corner of the room.• Play four corners. Make a statement (e.g., “Kenzie’s family went to the pumpkin patch in this season” or “In this season, trees drop their leaves to get ready for cold weather.”). Students should go stand beside the fall poster. Continue to make statements until they have practiced each season a few times. Continue to add to the charts as the students learn more about seasonal impacts on living things and play the four corners game occasionally to reinforce learning.

Science Lesson: The Five Senses, Grade 1

Lesson Focus	The Five Senses
Lesson Objective	By the end of the lesson, students will know the location and function of the sensory organs.
Expectations	<p>Ontario Curriculum: Grade 1- B2.4 – identify the location and the function of various parts of the human body, including sensory organs</p> <p>United States NGSS: 1-LSI-1</p>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i> • The Five Senses – Kenzie's Little Tree (included chart) • Kenzie's Five Senses (included phrases) 
Introduction (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the location and function of the sensory organs. • Bring in five items to share so that students can use their senses (e.g., a sweet treat, a cotton ball soaked with vanilla or an essential oil, a bumpy or squishy toy, a beautiful photograph, a song or musical instrument).
Activities (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-read the four spreads in <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i> that start with, “Kenzie’s world is ...” and discuss how these pages give details about the five senses. • Distribute and explain the cut-and-paste sorting activity pages. • Provide student work time.
Consolidation (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back together as a whole class, discuss where they pasted each phrase. (Some phrases may be appropriate for more than one sense.) • Ask students to generate a phrase of their own that could fit under one of the senses and share this with the class or an elbow partner (e.g., “My world is crunchy apples. This would go under hear because I hear the crunch.”).



Science Lesson: Plant Adaptations / Reactions, Grade 3

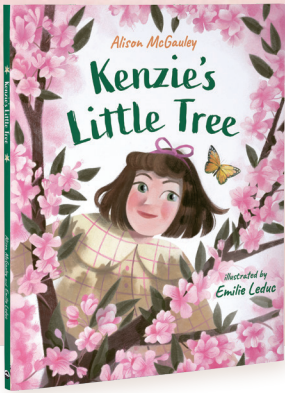
Lesson Focus	Plant adaptations, reactions, and resilience
Lesson Objective	By the end of the lesson, students will know how different plants adapt and interact with environmental changes.
Expectations	Ontario Curriculum: Grade 3- B2.4 – describe ways in which a variety of plants adapt and/or react to their environment and to changes in their environment United States NGSS: 3-LS2.C
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i>• One Plant Adaptations Chart and one plant page with cutouts for the teacher and for each small group• Computers, tablets or books for research• Paper and drawing tools
Introduction (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i>• One Plant Adaptations Chart and one plant page with cutouts for the teacher and for each small group• Computers, tablets or books for research• Paper and drawing tools
Activities (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through modeling, and with student help, complete a Plant Adaptations Chart for the cactus.• Divide students into groups. Each group must discuss, cut, and paste their adaptations and reasons onto the Plant Adaptations Chart. They may need to research to complete the activity.• Each group shares their completed chart with the class.
Consolidation (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have students choose the adaptation that they find most interesting and draw a labeled diagram of this adaptation.

Reading Lesson: Literary Devices, Grades 1–3

Lesson Focus	Literary devices
Lesson Objective	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify simple literary devices according to their grade level.
Expectations	<p>Ontario Curriculum: Grade 1-3 – C3.1 – identify simple literary devices (rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, consonance, simile, metaphor, assonance) and describe how they communicate meaning.</p> <p>US Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.R.1.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.R.2.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.R.3.4</p>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i>• Phrase Cards from <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i> (pre-cut)• Phrase Cards for Student Practice (pre-cut)• Chart paper
Introduction (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the literary devices as appropriate for your grade. Post these as headings on chart paper or board (e.g., rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, simile, assonance, consonance, metaphor).
Activities (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choosing the cards that suit your students, read the “Phrase Cards from <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i>” to the class, and have students help to paste them as examples under the correct headings. [1. onomatopoeia, 2. alliteration, 3. simile, 4. metaphor, 5. consonance, 6. assonance, 7. alliteration, 8. simile]• Discuss how these devices help to communicate meaning: similes and metaphors help readers to know what the story is about (change, cycles, strength and resilience) and make the writing more interesting and poetic.• Hand out one card from the “Student Practice” page to each small group and have them discuss and decide on their literary device.
Consolidation (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite groups to paste their card under the correct heading and explain their reasoning.• Ask if anyone can make up a sentence or phrase that fits under one of the categories.

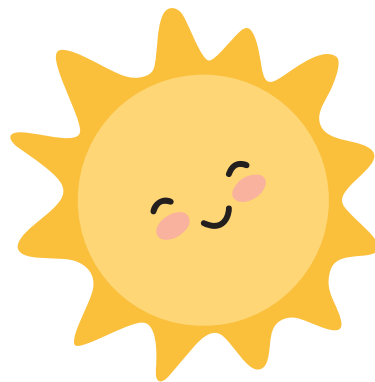
Writing Lesson: Recount Writing About a Family Adventure, Grades 1–3

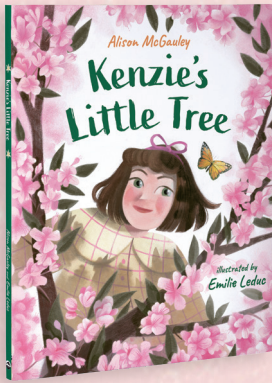
Lesson Focus	Recount writing
Lesson Objective	Students will generate and develop ideas, write a draft, and use words that demonstrate their personal voice to write about a family adventure.
Expectations	<p>Ontario Curriculum: Grade 1–3: D1.2 – generate and develop ideas D2.1 – draft short texts D2.3 – demonstrate a personal voice</p> <p>US Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3</p>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i> • A Family Adventure graphic organizer (GO)
Introduction (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the family adventures in <i>KENZIE'S LITTLE TREE</i>: gardening, the farm, building a snow boat, reading in a fort, playing at the park. • “What’s a fun family adventure that you’ve had? Turn and tell your elbow partner.”
Activities Day 1 (30–60 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review voice (descriptive words that share thoughts, feelings, and opinions). Discuss how to show (“My voice shook”) and tell (“I was scared.”). • Choose one or more of the adventures in the book. Ask, “How do the characters feel? Which words and pictures show or tell this?” • Model how to use the GO. • Students fill in their GOs.
Consolidation (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share GO with a partner or small group.
Activities Day 2–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review yesterday’s discussion. • Model drafting a story from the GO that you filled in yesterday with special attention to the use of voice. • Students use their GOs to draft short recounts. • Allow time for revision.
Consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students to share with the class for feedback. • Students could give these stories to their families as a gift.



Needs of Living Things

Pictures for Introduction





The Five Senses - Kenzie's Little Tree

Cut out and paste onto
Kenzie's Five Senses chart



Handpicked Berries



Wet Leaves



Sparkling Frost



Honking Geese



Sweet Pine Needles



Crunchy Snow Snacks



Icy Wind



Dazzling Butterflies



Splashy Puddles



Roses and Lilies



Buzzing Bees



Sand between her toes



Sweet Cider



Fuzzy Scarf



Cardinals and Chickadees



Giggles



Cut Grass



Pancakes



Slippery Worms



Glittering Sunlight





Name **Kenzie's Five Senses**

See



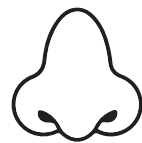
Taste



Hear



Smell



Feel





Phrase Cards from Kenzie's Little Tree



1. Buzzing

2. Bright
blossoms

3. But its
branches are
open, like
Mom's arms
waiting for
hugs.

4. Cold and
tired,
Kenzie cries.
Has she
broken her
promise to the
little tree?

5. Will ice
crack its
trunk?

6. Kenzie's
world is sweet
pine needles,
cardinals and
chickadees,
crunchy snow
snacks...

7. A storm
swirls

8. Some pills
are red, and
others are
yellow, like
the falling
leaves.





Phrase Cards from Kenzie's Little Tree



1. "**Hiss**," said
the snake.

2. The **goat** is
driving the
boat.

3. She's as fast
as a cheetah.

4. That
thunder
storm is a
mighty lion!

5. The **duck**
walked on a
stick.

6. The **blue**
jay swooped
through the
roof window.

7. That's a **big**
brown **bear**.

8. The **goose** is
on the **loose**!



Plant Adaptations Chart

Name



Adaptations:



Reasons:





Plant Adaptations Chart

1. Cut out the picture, the adaptations and the reasons.
2. Discuss, research and glue everything onto the Plant Adaptions Chart.



Cactus

Reasons:

This helps the cactus store water for dry periods.

This helps the cactus deter herbivores and reduce water loss.

This helps the cactus quickly absorb rainwater.

This helps the cactus reduce water loss.

Adaptations:

shallow roots

thick, wax coating

succulent stem

spines



Plant Adaptations Chart

1. Cut out the picture, the adaptations and the reasons.
2. Discuss, research and glue everything onto the Plant Adaptions Chart.



Sunflower

Reasons:

This helps give pollinators a good landing spot.

This fits in as many seeds as possible.

This helps the sunflower access groundwater during droughts.

This helps the sunflower minimize the amount of shade that falls on leaves below.

Adaptations:

broad flower heads

deep roots

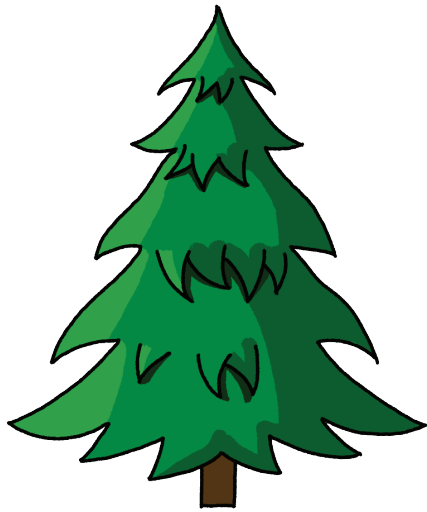
upright leaves

spiral seed rows



Plant Adaptations Chart

1. Cut out the picture, the adaptations and the reasons.
2. Discuss, research and glue everything onto the Plant Adaptions Chart.



Pine Tree

Reasons:

This reduces surface area and prevents water loss.

This protects the seeds and helps seed dispersal.

This seals wounds and prevents insect infestation.

This provides stability and allows access to water deep underground.

Adaptations:

pine cones

deep roots

sap

pine leaves



Plant Adaptations Chart

1. Cut out the picture, the adaptations and the reasons.
2. Discuss, research and glue everything onto the Plant Adaptions Chart.



Oak Tree

Reasons:

This maximizes exposure to sunlight.

This provides strength with less weight.

This attracts animals for seed dispersal.

This resists fire damage.

Adaptations:

acorns

deep roots

bark

lobed leaves



Plant Adaptations Chart

1. Cut out the picture, the adaptations and the reasons.
2. Discuss, research and glue everything onto the Plant Adaptions Chart.



Corn

Reasons:

This helps the plant maximize sunlight exposure.

This allows growth above weeds and competitors.

This houses bacteria that “fix” nitrogen.

This envelopes and protects seeds.

Adaptations:

root nodules

tall stems

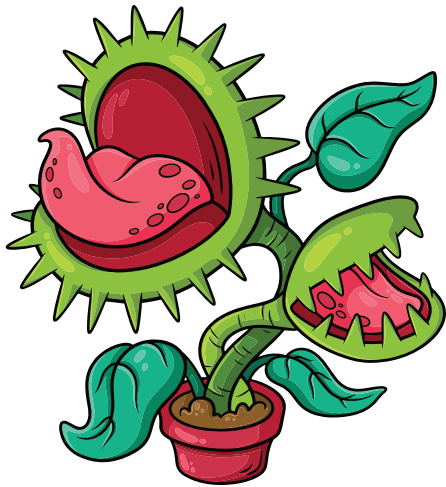
ears

broad leaves



Plant Adaptations Chart

1. Cut out the picture, the adaptations and the reasons.
2. Discuss, research and glue everything onto the Plant Adaptions Chart.



Venus Flytrap

Reasons:

This helps the plant close around captured insects.

This helps the plant detect prey.

This helps the plant digest captured prey.

This helps the plant overcome lack of nutrients in the soil.

Adaptations:

hinged leaves

trigger hairs

carnivorous diet

chemicals



A FAMILY ADVENTURE

Remember a fun time you had with your family and record your ideas in the graphic organizer.



Name



Where?

When?

Who with?

My Family Adventure

What?

Why?

**Words that
show and tell
how you felt**

