

HUG-A-TREE AND SURVIVE!



CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION'S

ONLINE
Classroom

Subjects:

Outdoor safety, nature, outdoor learning

Time:

30 – 40 minutes

Grades:

K-6

Developed by:

AdventureSmart

What to know before getting started:

Hug-A-Tree and Survive is an AdventureSmart program that helps lost children survive in the woods. It teaches children how to avoid getting lost in the woods, and also what to do if they do become lost. This program is great for classrooms, families and anyone interested in learning about outdoor safety. If a child should become lost in the woods, hugging a tree can help them stay safe, and be found. Staying near a tree offers some protection from the elements, and keeps lost children in the same place, which makes it easier for searchers to find them. In this activity, students will learn about the Hug-A-Tree and Survive program by reading the rules and watching a video that shows what to do if you find yourself lost in the woods. Students will pack a bag with all the items they need and will follow instructions to practice what they would do if they were lost in the woods.

Activity time!

Read this first...

- Visit the Hug-A-Tree and Survive program [website](#)
- Learn the four Hug-A-Tree and Survive rules:
 1. Tell an adult where you are going.
 2. If you are lost, “Hug-A-Tree” and stay put.
 3. Keep warm and dry.
 4. Help searchers find you by answering their calls.
- Watch the [12 minute video](#) to learn how you can be “AdventureSmart”.

...then follow these instructions

You are going to practice what to do if you were ever lost in the woods. After all, practice makes perfect! With the help of an adult, you are going to “Hug-A-Tree” and develop important outdoor safety skills.

- Gather the items you should bring with you on an outdoor adventure: sweater or jacket, small backpack, hat/cap/toque, whistle, emergency shelter (silver space blanket or small tarp), and some food and water.
- Put your food (small snacks), water, hat and emergency shelter in your backpack.
- Put the whistle on the zipper tab of your jacket or sweater if possible. (Otherwise, put in your backpack).
- Tell an adult where you are going.
- With an adult, head outside to a safe forested location, like a backyard or a locally-accessible park.
- Imagine what it would be like to be lost, separated from your family and in need of help from a search and rescue team.
- Without going any further, find a tree. If there is an open space nearby, find a tree close to that so you are easier to spot from a distance. Remember: a tree can help protect you from the elements while you’re outdoors, and most importantly, keep you in one place. Depending on where you are, there may not always be a tree. Perhaps your “tree” can be a large rock or bench at a park, or a sales counter at a mall. No matter what your landmark is, it is important to stay put, in order to stay safe.
- Look for and gather branches, leaves, and other plant materials to place at the base of your tree. Be sure to only grab materials that are safe and don’t appear dirty, poisonous or otherwise dangerous.
- Make a “nest”, by stacking your materials to make something comfortable and safe to sit on. This provides protection between you and the cold ground, helping to keep you warm and dry.
- Tuck your pants in your socks, zip up your sweater or jacket and put on your hat.
- Wrap yourself up in the emergency shelter, as seen in the video.
- Sit on your “nest” to keep warm and dry while you wait for help.
- Practice blowing your whistle three times, taking a short break, blowing three times again, and taking another short break. Continue until you have a good pattern going. This is how you would call for help.

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- Sweater or jacket
- Hat, cap or toque
- Emergency shelter (silver space blanket or small tarp)
- Safety whistle
- Small backpack
- Some food and water

Stop and think: To recap, ask yourself what's the first thing you should do when you're lost in the woods? Why is hugging a tree an important lesson to keep in mind? Were you able to find a tree in a safe location? Did you keep warm and dry? Do you think wearing bright colours would help searchers find you easier? How many times should you blow your whistle to call for help? Did you have a sip of water and a bite of food to help yourself stay comfortable? How would you conserve your food and water if you were waiting for help for a long time?

Share your learning adventure with us!

What did you learn by completing this activity? Do you have any questions? Did you take any photos you would like to share with others? Tag [@CanGeoEdu](#), [@BCAdvSmart](#) and [@TheGreatTrail](#) on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and let us know using the hashtag [#OnlineClassroom](#)!

Other ways to complete this activity:

- Visit the [AdventureSmart website](#) and watch the Hug-A-Tree and Survive video. Play the [online games](#), [word search](#), [true and false game](#) and [origami game](#).
- Print our [Hug-A-Tree and Survive colouring book](#) and repeat the steps with a younger sibling to share the safety information while colouring in the pages.

Interesting extras:

- There are 300 search and rescue groups in Canada.
- There are 9,000 search and rescue volunteers in Canada. These people donate over 300,000 hours of volunteer time to search and rescue, outdoor safety and training per year in Canada.
- British Columbia has the most search and rescue incidents in the country. Guess how many search and rescue incidents British Columbia has per year: 1200, 1700, or 2100? To find the answer visit [BCSARA.com](#) and [click on 'about'](#).
- Do you know what 'the essentials' are to carry in your backpack in case of an emergency? To find the answer, visit [AdventureSmart.ca](#) and [click on 'trip planning'](#).
- Do you know how to file a trip plan? (Trip plan = telling someone where you're going for an outdoor adventure). To find the answer, visit [AdventureSmart.ca](#) and [click on 'Heading Outdoors?'](#) on the homepage.
- Heading outdoors for a local family walk or bike ride? File a #TripPlan on our AdventureSmart App! Visit [AdventureSmart.ca](#), [download the free app](#) and follow the prompts. On your next outdoor adventure, even for a walk around the block, file a trip plan on the App and make sure you 'complete the trip plan' when you get back home.
- Do you want to win some outdoor gear, safety equipment or fun prizes? Visit the AdventureSmart social media pages to learn more, find daily safety tips and enter the giveaway contests ([@BCAdvSmart](#) on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook).

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- [The Great Trail](#) website
- Document your experience of conducting fieldwork on or around The Great Trail and create a story to be featured on The Great Trail stories page. Send your story to communications@tctrail.ca.
- Do you want to stay up to date on what's happening with The Great Trail? Sign up for Trail Talk, the newsletter which highlights Great Trail heroes and their stories.
- Share your photos of The Great Trail on social media using the handle [@TheGreatTrail](#).
- Download The Great Trail app and take it with you wherever you go!
- [Government of Canada citizen science portal](#)
- [Fieldwork guide and lesson plans](#)

AdventureSmart



Get informed & go outdoors!



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