**Wangari Maathai: Learning Resources**

**Before watching the video:**

* How many famous women can you name? Do you know what they are famous for? For example: Rosa Parks (civil rights), Florence Nightingale (nursing), Marie Curie (scientist), Jane Austen (author), Beyonce (music industry).
* How many trees can you name? For example: oak, ash, elm, alder, hawthorn, poplar, fir, blackthorn, willow, olive, palm.
* Find out where Kenya is, on a map.
* How do trees benefit the world? See if you can list 5. Then read the information below:
1. ***Clean Air****. Trees and forests can help save lives because of the particulates that they remove from the air.**Trees are often referred to as the “lungs of the planet” because of the oxygen they provide to other living things.*
2. ***Clean Water****. Forests provide natural filtration for water.*
3. ***Carbon Sequestration****. Burning fossil fuels puts heat-trapping carbon dioxide into our atmosphere, changing our climate in dangerous ways. Planting trees can slow down this process.*
4. ***Reduced Crime****. Researchers think that this is because green spaces have a calming effect and encourage people to spend more with their neighbours outdoors, bolstering community trust.*
5. ***Mental Health****. Feeling down? Take a walk in the woods. Several studies have found that access to nature leads to greater mental health overall.*
6. ***Temperature Control****. The shade and wind-breaking qualities that trees provide benefit everyone from the individual taking shelter from a hot summer day to entire cities.*
7. ***Flood Control****. Trees*[*n hold vast amounts of water*](https://www.theguardian.com/science/2004/sep/26/weather.ruralaffairs)*that would otherwise stream down hills and surge along rivers into towns.*
8. ***Wildlife Habitat****. Wildlife use trees for food, shelter, nesting, and mating. These habitats support the incredible variety of living things on the planet, known as biodiversity. By protecting trees, we also save all the other plants and animals they shelter.*

**During the video:**

* Pause the story on any page you wish, to look more closely at the illustration. Focus on the detail of what you can see. How many different colours are there in this picture? How many animals or humans, and what are they doing? What fruit? What patterns?

**After watching the video**

Try the following quizzes to see how much you have learned about Wangari Maathai and her Green Belt Movement. (Answers at the end)

**Planting the Trees of Kenya by Claire Nivola**

QUESTIONS

1. Which tree was sacred when Wangari was a little girl?
2. In which country did Wangari go to school?
3. Who ran the school?
4. What important message did they teach Wangari?
5. How long did she spend away at school?
6. What had happened to the land when Wangari returned to Kenya?
7. Why were people going to stores?
8. What was happening to the health of the people?
9. What was the effect of people having cut down so many trees?
10. Who did Wangari get to help her plant trees?
11. Finish this sentence: “When we see that we are part of the problem….”
12. What were the advantages of the tree planting?
13. What did Wangari give to schools and soldiers?
14. Wangari uses the idea of trees as a metaphor for helping the land. What is the metaphor?

ANSWERS.

1. The fig tree.
2. America.
3. Benedictine nuns.
4. To think beyond herself to the world around her.
5. Five years.
6. Many of the trees had been cut down to grow crops to sell instead.
7. People were selling everything they grew, so they had to buy their food in shops instead of growing it on their land and eating it.
8. The store food was expensive and wasn’t as good for them as the food they had grown themselves, so everyone was weaker and often sickly.
9. Women had to walk further to find firewood. There was no shade so the soil turned to dust. There were no roots so the soil became loose. Rain washed the loose earth into the rivers, making them dirty.
10. Groups of women.
11. “…we can become part of the solution.”
12. Families became healthier again. The women had work and this gave them status and community. The land became healthier again.
13. Seedlings to plant.
14. Trees are like clothes.

**Wangari Maathai; The Woman who planted millions of trees, by Franck Prevot**

QUESTIONS

1. How many languages could Wangari speak? Can you name them?
2. What is the name of a leopard in the Gikuyu language? How is this related to Wangari’s name?
3. What expression does Wangari’s mother teach her, that she never forgets?
4. Which land did the British colonists take for themselves?
5. What happens that allows Wangari to go to school?
6. How does Wangari get to go to school in the United States of America?
7. What year does Wangari create the Green Belt movement?
8. What is the government’s reaction to her setting up the movement?
9. Who is the authoritarian leader at the time?
10. What is an authoritarian state?
11. Why is Wangari put in prison?
12. What is a democracy? Why do you think Wangari wants one?
13. How does Wangari use trees to get communities to work together instead of fighting each other?
14. What is Wangari Maathai’s nicknamae?
15. When did she win the Novel Peace Prize?

ANSWERS

1. Four: Kikuyu, Swahili, English, and German.
2. Ngari. Wangari’s name means”she who belongs to the leopard.
3. A tree is worth more than its wood.
4. They took the best land.
5. Her brother Nderitu asks their mother why she doesn’t go to school.
6. Senator John F. Kennedy invites 600 young Kenyans to go to the USA to do their studies. Wangari is chosen.
7. 1977.
8. They don’t like the fact that a woman (who is supposed to be submissive in their culture) is spreading the word about the people empowering themselves.
9. President Daniel arap Moi.
10. An authoritarian state is a form of **government** characterized by strong central power and limited political freedoms.
11. She is put in prison because she stands up to the authoritarian state: protesting about the government and speaking out against it.
12. Democracy is a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives (MPs in the UK). Wangari wants ordinary people to have more say in what happens in their country.
13. She encourages tribes to offer young trees to neighbouring tribes as symbols of peace. (This way the President can’t divide them against each other and therefore keep his power).
14. Mama Miti – ‘the mother of trees’

**Further ideas and activities:**

Choose from the following:

* Look at the benefits of trees that are listed at the beginning of these learning resources (the Benefits of Trees). Discuss which you think are the most important.
* Think about the differences between the two stories: which book is the more political, in your opinion? Which is the more poetical? Choose examples of language from each story to back up your opinions.
* Think about the differences between the two styles of illustrations in the stories: how would you describe each style? Which do you personally prefer, and why? Try and paint something in the style of each.
* Find out more about Wangari Maathai’s life. Make a timeline of her life.
* Find out more about the Green Belt Movement (and hear Wangari talk about it) on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQU7JOxkGvo>
* Watch a video of Wangari making her Nobel Peace Prize speech at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZap_QlwlKw>. Discuss why this speech is important.
* Imagine you are Wangari, and write a series of diary extracts from the key moments in her life: going to America to learn; returning from America to find Kenya so changed; starting the Green Belt Movement; protesting against the authoritarian state; becoming assistant minister of the environment; getting the Nobel Peace Prize.
* Find out about who else has been given the Novel Peace Prize.
* Write a poem about the importance of trees.
* Go and plant a tree, or join a group who plants trees locally!
* Find out more about the Woodland Trust, the UK’s largest woodland conservation charity.