

The Life of a Hickory Tree

by Dina McClellan

It is fall in the forest. Squirrels are busy. They are looking for nuts. They need to store the nuts. They save them to eat in the winter.

This squirrel does not save all the nuts. He eats one now. He cracks the shell. Then he eats the tasty nut.



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READ & RESPOND

Summarize

Why do squirrels need to save the nuts?



A Lucky Nut

Another squirrel finds a hickory nut. He hears a noise. He drops the nut and runs away.

The nut hits a stone. It bounces to the ground. Soon, leaves fall on the nut. They hide it.

This is a lucky nut. It will grow into a hickory tree. Most other nuts will not. Squirrels and other animals will eat them.

READ & RESPOND

Summarize

Does the heading “A Lucky Nut” tell about the text on this page? How?

Hidden from Sight

Even bears like to eat hickory nuts. They eat them whenever they can.

Bears do not find this hidden nut. The shell of the nut rots. During winter, the nut sinks into the soil.

Animals are looking for food in the forest. Rabbits and mice do not find the nut. It is buried deep in the ground.

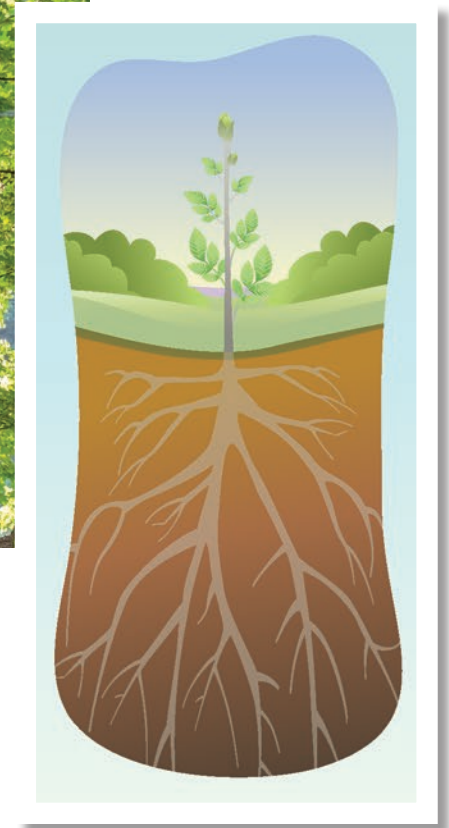
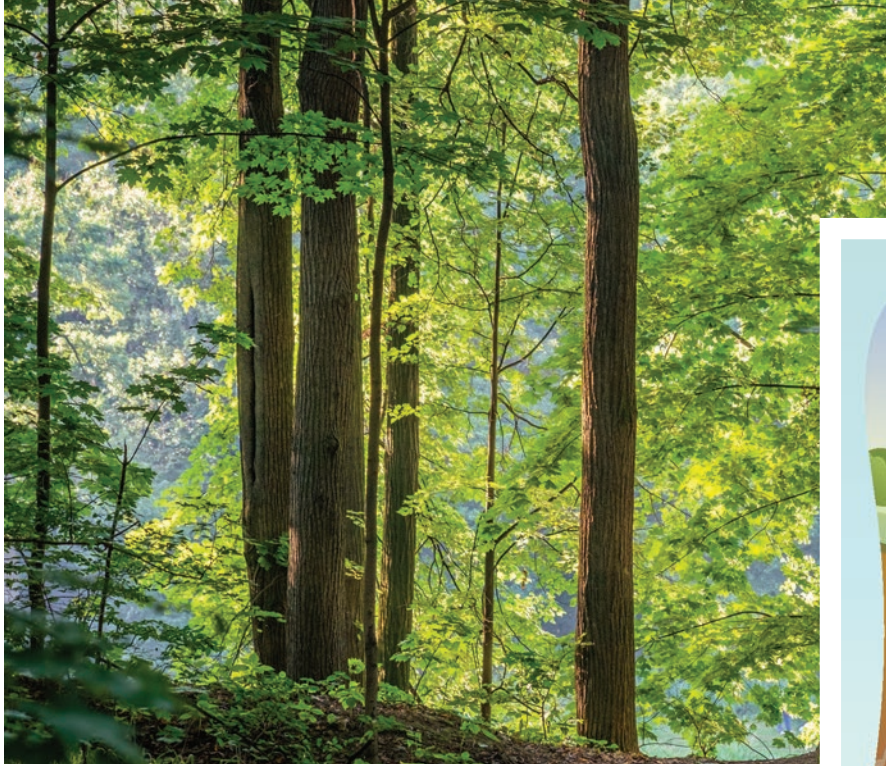


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READ & RESPOND

Content-Area Words

Think about the words “winter,” “animals,” and “forest.” What subject area do these words come from?



The Seed Sprouts

It is spring in the forest. The seed inside the nut sprouts. It grows roots. They go deep into the ground. The roots absorb water from the soil.

The little tree grows. Years pass. The big hickory tree makes more nuts. Most of them never sprout.

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Content-Area Words

Where else have you heard the words “roots,” “sprouts,” and “soil”? Does that help you understand what is happening in the text?

A Growing Tree

Time passes. After ten years, the tree is seven feet tall. It is as thick as a man's thumb.

The leaves grow in clumps of five. They are light green in the summer. In the fall, they turn yellow.

The tree faces many dangers. It can be chopped down. Fires can hurt it. Bugs may make holes in it. Birds may peck the holes and make them bigger.



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READ & RESPOND

Summarize

What does the heading tell you about the information on this page?

Getting Older

More time passes. After twenty years, the bark is still smooth. Now the tree is thirty years old. Its coverings start to split. Each part of the bark is tight in the middle. The edges curve away from the trunk. This makes the tree look shaggy.

After forty years, the first nuts appear. Some of the nuts take root. They might grow into trees. Hickory trees can live for 300 years!



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READ & RESPOND

Summarize

Write one sentence that summarizes the information on this page.



The Cycle Goes On

It's fall in the forest. A squirrel comes out. It knows when the hickory tree has nuts. The squirrel looks for them.

Other animals look for nuts, too. Will they find all of the nuts? Will one lucky nut sprout in the spring?

Throughout the forest, trees are growing. Each one is in a different stage of life.



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Content-Area Words

Look at the heading on this page. Do you know about any other "cycles"? List one.

Reread and Respond



1 Which kinds of animals look for hickory nuts?

Hint

For clues, see the sections called "A Lucky Nut" and "Hidden from Sight."

2 How does the hickory tree get water from the soil?

Hint

For clues, see the section that has a heading about sprouting.

3 Look at the trees on the first and last pages of the story. Why do they look similar?

Hint

Think about the story. Read the headings to remind yourself about the tree's life.