

How Big is a Coast Redwood Tree?

In this activity students gain an understanding for the height and width of a coast redwood tree. Plan to do the first part of this activity outdoors.

Materials:

- 367 feet of string
- (Optional) chalk
- Tape measure

What You Do

Height

1. Select two students. Give each student one end of the string. Have them stretch it out on the playground. (Optional: use sidewalk chalk and mark off 367 feet) Have students lie down, head to toe, for the full length of the string.
2. How many students does it take to reach the end of the string? Note: you may want to invite other classes to help you measure. If your class does it alone, have students record the number of times they are used to measure the tree.

Circumference

1. Ask students how you could measure the circumference of a tree if you didn't have a tape measure. Have students brainstorm different ways.
2. If no one suggested using their arms, demonstrate how they can be used. Have students work in pairs. One student stretches out her arms. The other measures the distance from finger tips on one hand to finger tips on the other. Record the distance. Now measure the same student's height. Record that number. Compare the two. Generally the numbers are just about the same.
3. To demonstrate the circumference of a coast redwood, have four students about four feet tall form a circle with their arms stretched out. Sixteen feet is the average size trunk of a coast redwood.