

*Listen to the Language of the Trees:  
A story of how forests communicate underground*

**Discussion Guide**

Grades 4 – 8

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Discuss the idea of trees communicating with each, especially through the ground underneath.
- Before reading, have a class discussion to activate prior knowledge about trees, root systems, and seedlings. Make a list of student generated responses on an anchor chart or whiteboard.
- Frontload vocabulary: language of the trees, forest floor, roots, seedlings, communication, intertwined, nestled, underground web, drought, pests, nutrients

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- Why is it important that the older trees “communicate” with the seedlings and younger trees?
- Are the illustrations and stories within this text helpful towards understanding the concepts of communication between the seedlings, younger trees, and the older trees? Why?
- What are you learning about the cycle of life of trees in the forest?

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

Use a long art paper roll to have the students illustrate and label the range of trees in the forest (from seedling to young tree to maturing trees to older trees). Be sure to include the root system for each.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to learn more about the language of the forest & trees.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books about trees such as [Are Trees Alive?](#) and [Planting the Trees of Kenya: The Story of Wangari Maathai](#).