Bark Rubbing

Leaf rubbing is a popular activity that can help you learn about the different shapes and veining patterns of tree leaves. However, the leaves are just starting to come out on most trees, but no worries. Have you ever looked closely at the bark of a tree? Just like leaves, each type of tree has a different pattern to its bark. Some bark is chunky like popcorn, while other bark is smooth or pebbly. Some trees have ridges running up and down the trunk. Still others have lines that encircle the trunk. And some tree bark patterns change as the tree ages! You can try bark rubbing to capture these patterns and learn more about trees.

What you will need

- Paper (newsprint or copier paper)
- Crayons with their paper removed
- Masking tape (optional)
- A tree - ideally with a width of at least 10 inches

How to make your bark rubbing

Make sure your tree is in a safe location before you begin. Place a piece of paper over the bark of your tree at a comfortable height for working. You can use the masking tape to hold the paper in place.

Use the side of your crayon to rub over the paper to make a copy of the bark’s pattern on the paper. Try experimenting by pressing hard and soft on the paper. Try using different colors. Look for other trees that you can make a bark rubbing from. See what different patterns you can find.