



The InvestiGator Club™ Prekindergarten Learning System

Investigation

PARENT'S
EDITION

Integrated Activities for Exploring, Experimenting,
and Making Discoveries

Sensational Seasons



THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMPANY™

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This Investigation celebrates the uniqueness of the four seasons. Each new season brings different sights and sounds for children to explore: the howling wind and crackling of colorful leaves in fall; cold temperatures and glistening snow in winter; baby birds, bugs, and colorful blooms in spring; and the blazing sun in summer. The four seasons provide many investigating opportunities for the InvestiGators and for your child, too. Let's investigate the sensational seasons!

Part 2 Fabulous Fall

Remind your child that together you have been learning about the four seasons—fall, winter, spring, and summer. You already have learned all about summertime; now the weather is growing cooler, and fall is approaching. Tell your child: *During this Investigation, you will learn all about the season called fall. You will discover the special changes that happen during fall that make this season sensational too. Are you ready to start investigating?*

Oral Language/Science/ Music

Take a sneak peek into fall by sharing things your child sees and does during this season


Materials

- red, yellow, brown construction-paper leaves
- scissors

All About Fall

Ask your child to help you cut out paper leaves in rich fall colors. Use the leaves to begin a talk about fall. Explain: *Fall is one season that happens after summer ends. Another name for "fall" is "autumn." Dilly and the InvestiGators love to walk through Circle Forest to see leaves changing colors and falling off trees.*

- Lead your child to talk about other things that are special about fall:
 - how the weather begins to change
 - the warmer clothes you wear
 - fruits that arrive in fall—apples, gourds, pumpkins
 - what animals do to prepare for winter—migrate, store food
- Tell your child that together you will be learning a lot about fall. Explain that as the InvestiGators walk through Circle Forest they like to sing a song about falling leaves. Teach your child the following song to the tune of "London Bridge." Walk and sing with your child while tossing the leaves in the air and watching them fall. In the end, gather the leaves into one big pile.



*Autumn leaves are falling down
To the ground, to the ground.
Autumn leaves are all around
Fall is here!*

*Pick them up to make a pile,
Make a pile, make a pile.
Pick them up to make a pile.
Hooray for fall!*

- You might want to visit your library to check out and read aloud a book about fall. For example:

Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf by Lois Ehlert
Fall Leaves Fall by Zoe Hall
Now It's Fall by Lois Lenski

**Science/Oral Language/
Mathematics/Art**

*Your child can adopt a tree
and observe ways it changes
during fall.*

Materials

- crayons
- white drawing paper
- measuring tape
- fall leaves
- string
- tape
- branches

Adopt a Tree

Explain that the members of the InvestiGator Club have a very special tree in Circle Forest that they call their own. It's the big oak tree where they have built their clubhouse. Take your child outside to adopt a nearby tree.

- Your child can hug and name the tree. Have your child feel the bark and talk about how it feels: *rough, prickly.*
- Demonstrate how to make a bark rubbing using a crayon and white paper.
- Help your child use a measuring tape to measure around the trunk. Ask how tall the tree is by comparing it with other objects: *tallest tree in the yard; taller than a house; shorter than the light pole.*
- Back inside, have your child draw a picture of the tree. Encourage your child to observe how the tree changes during the weeks of fall and draw pictures to record his or her observations.
- When the leaves fall off the tree, help your child to collect some to make a leaf mobile by attaching string to each leaf and connecting it to a branch.



Mathematics/Oral Language

Busy little hands collect, sort, and count fall leaves.

Materials

- autumn leaves from trees
- [Matching Leaves Activity Sheet](#) for each child
- glue or tape
- scissors



Count and Count Again

Explain to your child that Chuck Wood likes to go hunting for different autumn leaves so he can sort them into groups and count them. Chuck calls on Bruno Buzzbee to go along because he knows that Bruno can fly above the trees and spot the ones that are different for his collection.

Go outdoors with your child to collect leaves from different trees. You might want to get the whole family involved. You will need two or more of each kind of leaf. When back indoors:

- Ask your child to count all the leaves that were collected.
- Have your child sort the leaves by matching those that are alike and then count again to determine the number of groups.
- Talk about likenesses and differences in the groups.
- Have your child count a third time to find out how many leaves are in each group.
- Print the [Matching Leaves Activity Sheet](#) to provide practice in matching like shapes. Tell your child to cut out the leaves on the page and then put each leaf in the matching basket. Your child can use glue or tape to attach the leaves.

Oral Language/Health

Your child will discover leaves that can be eaten while making a healthful snack to enjoy.

Materials

- iceberg and red-leaf lettuce
- carrots, celery, tomatoes
- shredded cheese
- tuna salad (optional)
- salad dressing



Lettuce Leaf Rollups

Tell your child that Bruno Buzzbee helps Dilly Gator tend her vegetable garden. Dilly always plants lettuce in her garden. She knows it's healthful and tastes great in a salad. One of Dilly's favorite snacks to eat is a lettuce leaf rollup.

Show your child examples of iceberg lettuce and red-leaf lettuce. You might want to offer a sample of each to determine if they taste the same or different. Then help your child follow directions for making lettuce leaf rollups.

- Give your child one big lettuce leaf—iceberg or red-leaf.
- Offer filling choices such as shredded carrots, chopped celery, chopped tomatoes, shredded cheese, and tuna salad.
- Have your child fill the lettuce leaf and add some salad dressing. Roll up and enjoy! Make some for the whole family.

*Simulate a pumpkin patch
and go hunting for the perfect
pumpkin.*

Materials

- miniature pumpkins
- vine of artificial leaves
- chart paper, black marker
- markers or paints
- [Pumpkin Patch Activity Sheet](#)

Pumpkin Patch

Tell your child that each autumn Great Auntie Lu goes with Dilly, JT, and their friends to a local pumpkin patch. They all hunt for the perfect pumpkin to decorate. Great Auntie lets the others use her paints to decorate their pumpkins for fall. Explain: *Today you will hunt for the perfect pumpkin to decorate too! Let's start investigating!*

- Get the whole family involved in this fun activity, or plan to do it with a group of children. Simulate a pumpkin patch indoors or outside by placing miniature pumpkins in a vine of artificial leaves. Beforehand write each family member's name (or child's name) on one of the pumpkins.
- Teach everyone the following pumpkin-hunting song to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell" to sing while they search for their very own pumpkin.

*A-hunting we will go,
A-hunting we will go.
To find the perfect pumpkin, oh,
A-hunting we will go.*

*It must be orange and round.
We'll hunt until it's found.
We'll find the perfect pumpkin, oh,
A-hunting we will go.*



- Once all the pumpkins have been found, talk about how pumpkins grow. Discuss what people do with pumpkins, such as carve them, make pumpkin pies, toast the seeds, and paint them to use as decoration. Create a list of ideas.
- Invite everyone to use markers or paints to decorate their pumpkins.
- At a later time, print out the [Pumpkin Patch Activity Sheet](#) for your child. Ask your child to help Dilly find her way to the pumpkin patch by tracing the path in the maze. Once the maze is solved, tell your child to help Dilly find the biggest pumpkin by coloring the one she should choose.
- You might want to plan a family outing to a real pumpkin patch and find the perfect pumpkin for carving.

Your child will become a gourd expert by comparing colors, sizes, and shapes and weighing different gourds.

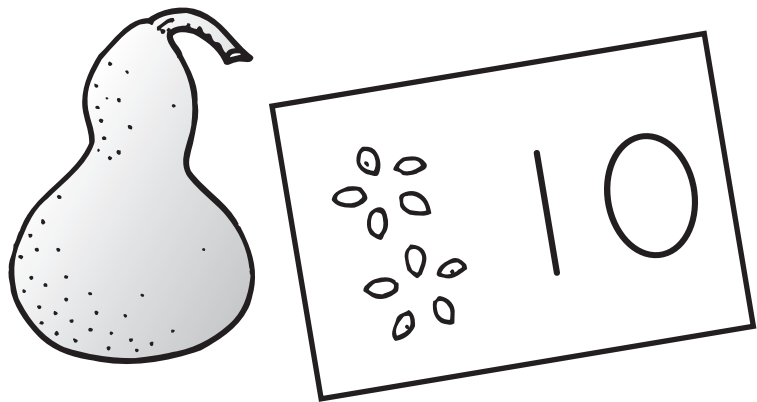
Materials

- variety of gourds
- scale
- tray
- cards, marker
- knife (parent use only)
- spoon

Gourds Galore

Tell your child: *The members of the InvestiGator Club love gourds. Dilly and Rosalita paint them. JT dries out gourds to make musical instruments. Bruno helps Chuck Wood make gourd birdhouses. Manny Salamander likes to eat them.*

- Go to the store with your child to find and buy a variety of gourds. Allow your child to examine the gourds and tell what he or she sees. Talk about colors, textures, sizes, and shapes.
- Back home, ask your child to hold two gourds, one in each hand, to predict which is heaviest. Then have him or her weigh the gourds using a scale to determine if the guess was correct. Have your child line up the gourds from lightest to heaviest.
- Another option is to have your child determine which household items will weigh about the same as a gourd. After weighing both objects, ask your child if predictions were correct.
- Line up the gourds on a tray. Talk about what is inside each gourd. Invite your child to estimate how many seeds would be found. After agreeing on one number, write the estimate on a separate card. Record the number as a numeral, and ask your child to draw the same number of seeds. Then cut open each gourd, scoop out the pulp inside, and count the seeds together. Record this number, and compare with the estimate. Ask: *Is the number more or less than the number you guessed?*



- After estimating and checking the number of seeds in each gourd, ask: *Which gourd has the most seeds? Which gourd has the fewest seeds?*

Share the legend of Johnny Appleseed and learn about the differences in apples we have available today.




Materials

- version of “Johnny Appleseed”
- three varieties of apples (yellow Golden Delicious, green Granny Smith, red Macintosh)
- chart paper, markers
- black marker
- knife (parent use only)
- paper towels
- paint, shallow paint trays
- art paper
- [Johnny Appleseed’s Trees Activity Sheet](#)
- crayons

Happy Birthday, Johnny Appleseed!

Explain: Each fall it is apple-harvest time. And each fall Great Auntie Lu tells the story about Johnny Appleseed to Dilly, JT, and their friends.

- Go to your local library or bookstore to find a version of the story of Johnny Appleseed. Read the story to your child.
- Show a variety of apples. Choose apples of different colors: yellow Golden Delicious, green Granny Smith, and red Macintosh. Create a chart on paper, and draw yellow, green, and red apples. Your chart might look like this:

Kind of apple	Estimated number of seeds	Actual number of seeds	Apple favorites
Yellow Golden Delicious 			
Green Granny Smith 			
Red Macintosh 			

- Talk about how the seeds inside each apple make new apple trees. Refer back to the story of Johnny Appleseed. Invite your child to predict how many seeds are inside each. Write predictions on the chart. Then cut open the apples and have your child count the seeds. Record the number on the chart. Ask: *Was your prediction low or high or just right?*
- Give your child a slice of each kind of apple to taste, then make a mark next to the apple on the chart to indicate which one is liked the best. Invite family members to do the same. Talk about reasons for everyone’s choices. Count the marks with your child to find out the family’s favorite apple.
- Use apple halves to make apple prints. Pat the cut surface of the apple dry. Place paint in shallow containers. Demonstrate how to dip the apple halves in the paint and press them on paper to make prints.
- Print the [Johnny Appleseed’s Trees Activity Sheet](#). Help your child count the apples on the first tree in each row and color the same number of apples on the tree next to it.



Mathematics

It's time to put together puzzles to form apple shapes.

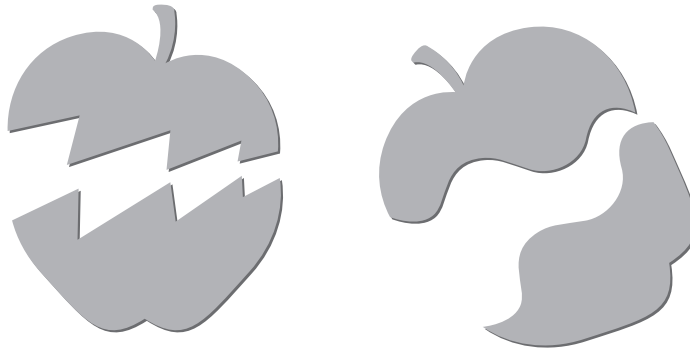
Materials

- red construction paper
- green and yellow construction paper (optional)
- resealable bags

Puzzling Apples

Beforehand create apple puzzles by cutting six large, identical apples from red construction paper. Cut each apple into two puzzle pieces. Make each cut different: straight, curved, zigzag, looped, wavy, and so on. Place all 12 puzzle pieces in a resealable bag.

- Explain to your child: *Chuck Wood likes to eat red apples and put together puzzles, so Chuck has made some apple puzzles for you to put together!*
- Have your child match all the apple pieces to put together the six apples. Once the puzzles are completed, ask your child to count the number of apples there are.
- Go to the library with your child to look for the book *The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree* by Gail Gibbons. Read this story to your child, or choose a favorite apple-themed story to read.



Music/Movement/Social Studies

The whole family can don their country-western dress and have an old-fashioned square dance.

Materials

- pumpkins, gourds, cornstalks, hay or straw (see note below)
- clothing for a scarecrow, newspaper if needed
- recording of square-dance music

Swing Your Partner

Remind your child that JT loves all kinds of music. Use JT to get your child excited about having a fall-themed square dance. The dance can be planned for the family, or invite your child's friends over for an afternoon of fun.

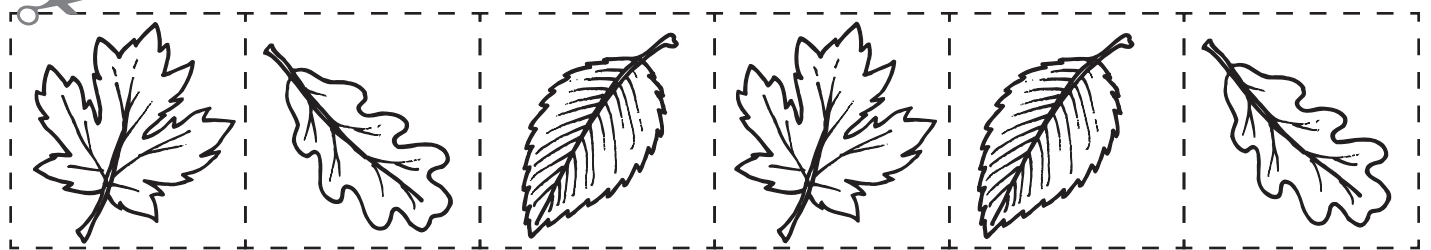
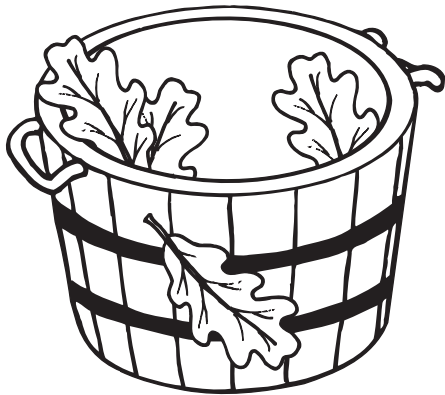
- Have your child help decorate a space indoors or outside with pumpkins, gourds, cornstalks, and hay or straw. **Note:** Allergies to hay or straw might be an issue.
- Make a scarecrow. Stuff him with newspaper if straw or hay cannot be used.
- On the day of the square dance, invite everyone to wear any country-western gear they have—vests, jeans, boots, plaid shirts, kerchiefs, or hats.
- Teach everyone the steps to a simple square dance or make up your own dance. Play a recording of square-dance music such as "Turkey in the Straw."

Name _____

Matching Leaves

Cut out the leaves.

Put each leaf in the matching basket.



Investigation: Sensational Seasons/Part 2

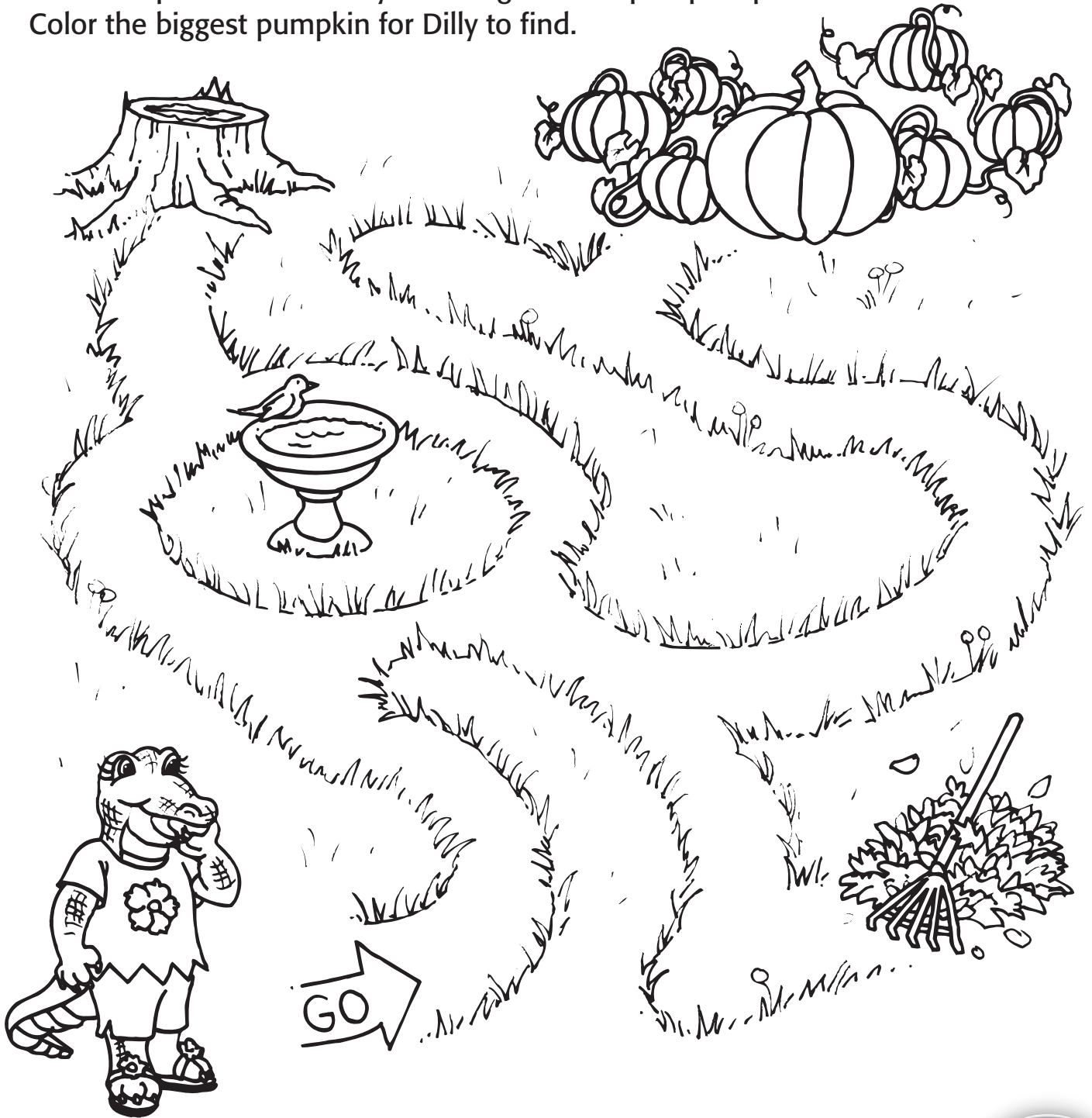
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Name _____

Pumpkin Patch

Color the path to show Dilly how to get to the pumpkin patch.
Color the biggest pumpkin for Dilly to find.



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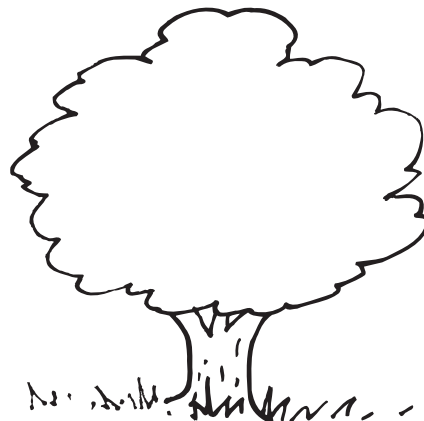
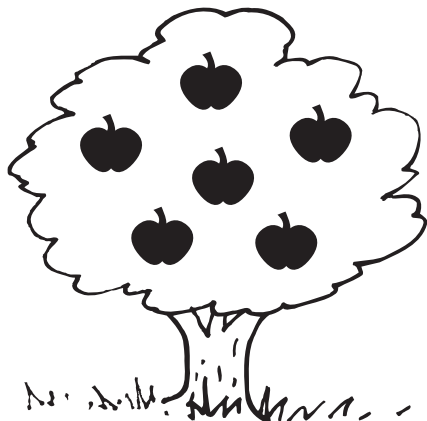
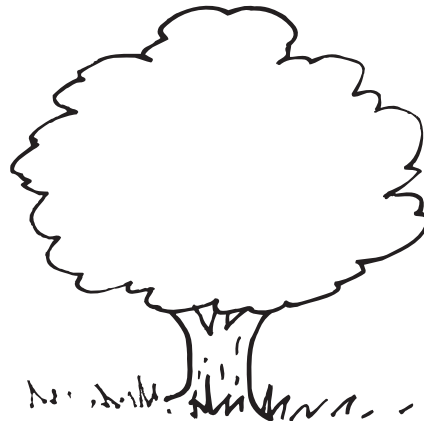
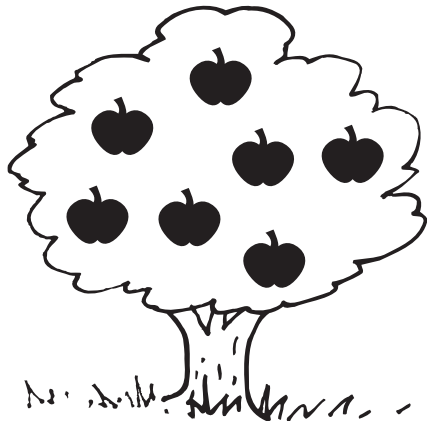
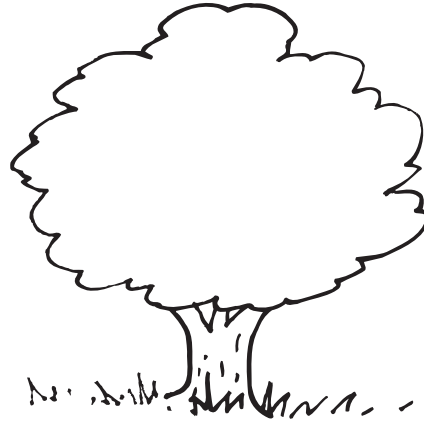
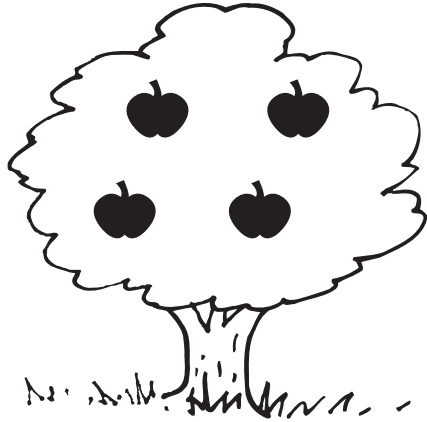


Name _____

Johnny Appleseed's Trees

Count the apples in the first tree in each row.

Color the same number of apples on the second tree.



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