



## **Taking a Closer Look at Wood**

### *Make a wood impression and write a wood ID*

**Age Range:** 5-10, 11-13

**Time Required:** 1 hour

**Keywords:** Drawing, Writing, Photos, Forests



#### **Background**

How many different kinds of wood do you think there are? In the 1960s, William L. Stern, a botanist at the National Museum of Natural History, organized the museum's specimens of wood and encouraged people to add to the collection. Today this "Wood Collection" includes 42,500 specimens and almost 5,000 microscope slides of wood.



**Be a Museum Expert!** Look at some of the images from the Wood Collection ([http://botany.si.edu/colls/wood/image\\_gallery.cfm](http://botany.si.edu/colls/wood/image_gallery.cfm)). Can you think of words to describe what you see? (Examples: rough, smooth, bumpy.) Pick one of the images and write a description of it. Exchange descriptions with a classmate. Can you find each other's wood image on the basis of your descriptions? How could you improve your description to make it easier to ID your wood?



**Create It!** With crayons and paper, make rubbings of the bark of some of the trees you see around you every day. In what ways are your barks similar? How are they different? Do any of them look like any of the specimens in the Wood Collection?



**Talk About It!** Share your wood-image description. Without identifying which piece you've described, challenge ePals to guess which wood you're describing. Join **Smithsonian Chat** on ePals Student Forums.



**Share It!** Share your work with classrooms around the world. Scan or take a digital photo of your wood rubbing and upload it to ePals Media Gallery. Be sure to describe what kind of trees you used to create your rubbings. Include a good written description of the trees as well.