

# From Toothpicks to Tires

If you were asked the question “How many times a day do you use or see products made from a tree?” would you guess three, ten, or 100 times? Most of us have only a small **inkling** of how much trees **impact** and improve our lives.

One of the most easily identified uses of trees is in the construction industry. Trees are used to make lumber and plywood, which are then used to construct all types of buildings. Look around your bedroom and you’ll also see wood that’s been used to make furniture, doors, window frames, trim, and flooring. Search even closer and you’ll notice pencils made from wood, wooden handles, picture frames, and lots more. If you had X-ray vision, you’d also see insulation behind your walls and roofing above your head; both may be made from wood products.

You already know that wood is used to make the paper in the books you read, the worksheets you complete, and the tests you **labor** over. But you may be surprised to learn that wood is also used to make lots of other products you use in your daily life. **By-products** from trees are in everything from food flavorings to glue to deodorants! Tree by-products such as cinnamon, maple syrup, artificial vanilla flavoring, and imitation bacon add flavor to our world. Trees are also used to make items such as varnish, **adhesives**, cleaning products, and even rubber tires.

Trees also impact our lives in other important ways. They help clean the air we breathe by removing harmful carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. In the areas around your home and school, trees provide shade, which can help lower energy costs. The roots of trees hold the soil and help prevent landslides and **erosion**.

It’s clear that trees aren’t just plants that are pretty to look at. From toothpicks to tires, they are an important **natural resource** that we benefit from every single day.



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / Stocksolutions

**Strict environmental standards have helped make forestry, paper, and packaging among the most sustainable industries in existence. These internationally respected forest management standards demonstrate a commitment to sustainability.**



On another sheet of paper, draw an outline of a tree, including the trunk and roots. Then choose one of these activities to complete inside the outline:

- Use context and other sources to define each boldfaced word above.
- Write a one-paragraph summary of the article.

# “From Toothpicks to Tires”

## Answer Key

Summaries will vary.

Definitions will vary.

- **inkling**: a slight, uncertain idea about something
- **impact**: a major influence or effect
- **labor**: to work hard
- **by-product**: something that is produced during the production of something else
- **adhesive**: a substance that causes adherence
- **erosion**: the gradual process of wearing something away
- **natural resource**: a substance that occurs naturally in the earth and was not made by humans

