



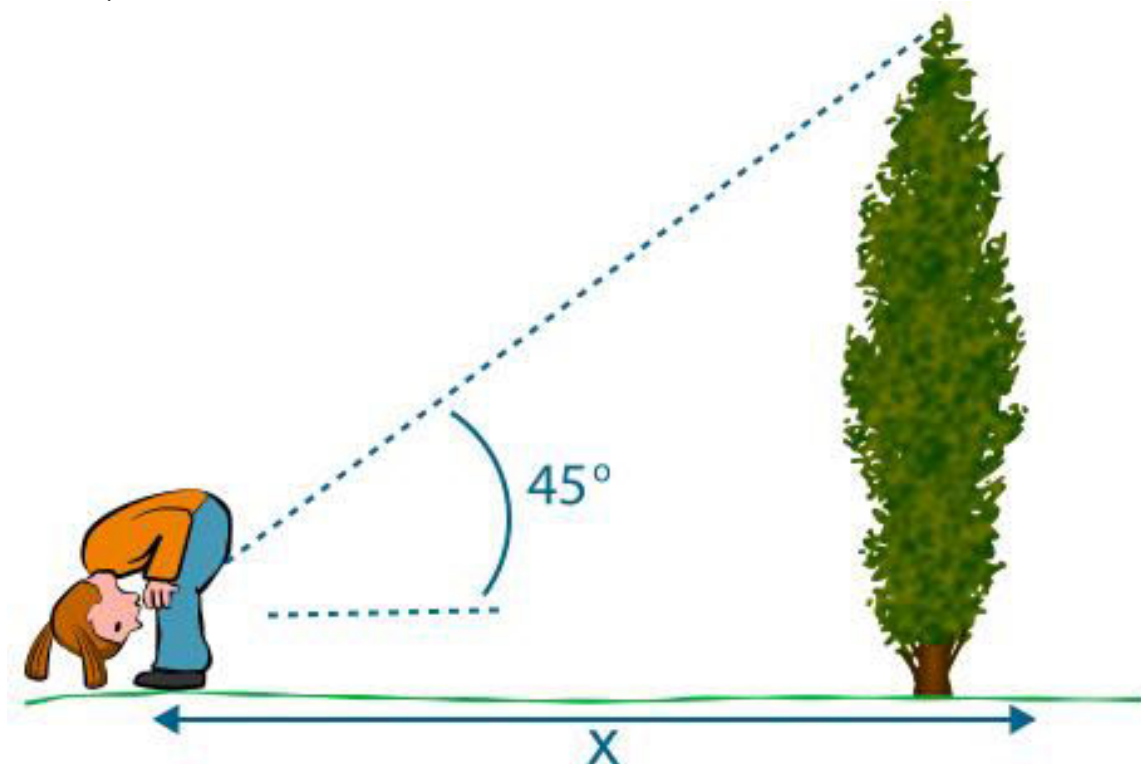
Year 3 – Rainforest Maths

Rainforest trees weigh hundreds of tonnes and are some of the tallest living structures on Earth, yet the soil that they are rooted in is only a few centimetres thick! This is because the rain falls so heavily here, much of the soil is washed away. Canopy trees build enormous *buttress* roots so that the tree stays up! [Take a look at Learning about the Rainforest for an example.](#)

Your challenges are:

- make estimates about how tall and wide the buttress roots are.
- the tallest trees in the rainforest are called the emergents - they can reach almost 90m in height. Can you measure 90 metres out in the park? How many children would it take to stand end to end to be as tall as the tree? How many adults?!
- how many times taller is a tree in the emergent layer than a tree in your playground or street?

You could estimate the height of the trees in the playground using a method used by the Native Americans.



They would bend over and look through their legs. They would walk far enough from the tree to find a place where they were just able to see the top of the tree (from their upside down position). The distance from this place to the base of the tree was approximately the height of the tree.

To find out why it works, have a look at the NRICH webpage [History of Measurement](#).

You could then draw the appropriate number of local trees to match the height of the tree from the emergent layer.

For extension activity ideas take a look at Learning Maths Outside the Classroom - [Animals to a Giant Scale](#).