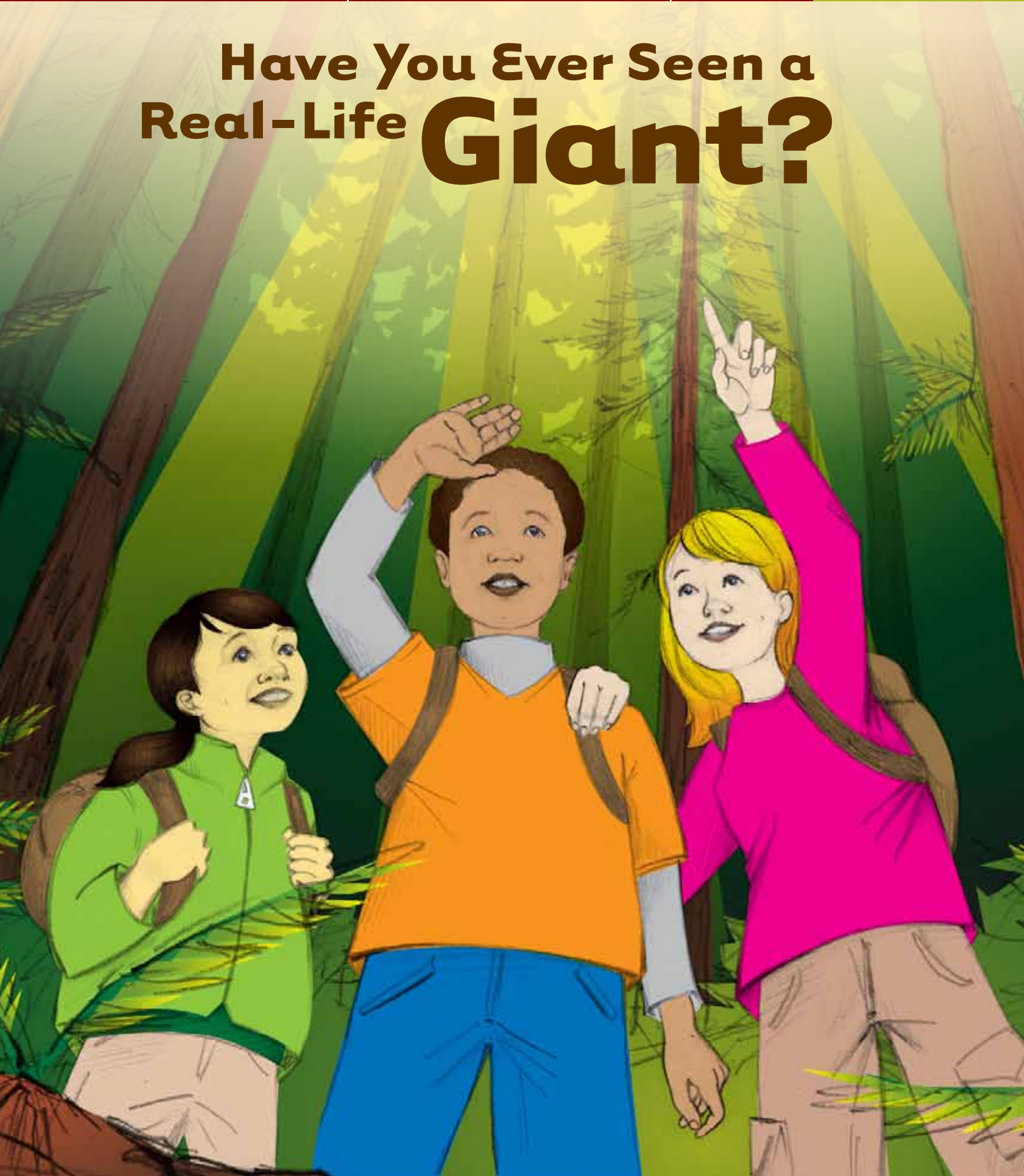




Have You Ever Seen a Real-Life **Giant?**





Coast redwoods are very special trees that grow naturally in only one part of the world — along the coast of northern California and southern Oregon.



These trees truly stand out because they are the tallest trees on Earth. Many of them are more than 320 feet high! A full-grown apple tree and even a 10-story building would look tiny next to one of these giants.

Besides being so tall, redwoods live a very long time. Some coast redwoods are more than 2,000 years old. These ancient trees need a healthy forest **environment** to go on living.

Apple Tree

10-Story Building

Giant Sequoia

Coast Redwood

How Can These Giants Get So Tall and Live So Long?

You may wonder how coast redwood trees can grow so tall. They start from tiny seeds and keep growing as long as they live. They have many **adaptations** or characteristics that help them live where they do.

Explore



On a straight sidewalk, mark a line with a stick or string. Taking normal steps (about a foot and a half apart), count 250 steps from that line. Look back at the mark you made. From where you are standing to that mark is about the height of the very tallest redwood trees — more than 360 feet.

One adaptation is their special bark, which is different from most other bark. Redwood bark is a beautiful red color. The bark also has tannic acid, which gives it a bad taste. This helps the tree keep away insects and pests.

Another adaptation is being able to survive forest fires. The coast redwood's tough, thick bark is made of a **fire-resistant** material and is capable of holding water, like a sponge. The tree's shape also protects it: The lower parts of its tall trunk have no branches or leaves, keeping the burnable part out of fire's reach. If a fire does burn the tree, it can **sprout** a new trunk from its base.

Probably the most important adaptation is that coast redwoods can get water from fog. Where redwoods live, there are rainy winters, but little rain the rest of the year. During the summer there is lots of fog. Unlike most leaves, redwood leaves can soak up fog. This keeps the tops of the trees from drying out and helps the trees grow all year.

These are just some of the adaptations coast redwoods have for living and growing in their special environment.





Explore

Find a tree or other plant in your school or neighborhood. Look for adaptations that help the plant:

- protect itself from being eaten or from the weather,
- get and store food and water, or
- make new plants.



Coast Redwoods Need a Healthy Forest

Environment

Coast redwoods live in just one small region of California and Oregon because this is the only area in the entire world where they grow naturally and get everything they need.

The weather is just the right temperature — it is never too warm or too cold. Winter rains and summer fog bring moisture all year long. The soil is filled with **nutrients**. The surrounding mountains protect the trees from wind and storms. This area is the perfect place for coast redwoods to grow and grow!

Even in this place, coast redwoods cannot live all alone. They need the other plants and animals of the redwood forest, such as ferns, wildflowers, squirrels, birds, black bears and deer. If roads or power lines or buildings break up the forest, coast redwood trees can become sick. Although they may live a short while this way, they need a healthy forest environment to live a long time.



Get Active



Learn More

Visit the Save the Redwoods League Web site at **SaveTheRedwoods.org**. Check out books from the library on redwood trees, forests or adaptations.



Inspire Others

Write a letter to a friend or draw a picture about redwoods. Send your redwood art, poetry, photos or memories to Save the Redwoods League, and we might post them on our Web site!



Visit a Park

Explore a park, nature area or botanical garden in your area. Find out what plants and animals are common there and whether there are any coast redwoods.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Everything we use comes from nature. You can help trees and nature by using less and recycling what you do use.



Plant a Native Tree

Help your teacher or family find a good spot for a new tree. Choose a tree that is adapted to your area. Help plant the tree and water it.

Saving the Redwoods

There used to be 2 million acres of coast redwood forests in California.



When gold was discovered in 1849, hundreds of thousands of people rushed to California to search for gold. These “forty-niners,” as they were called—and the people who came to California after them—cut lots and lots of trees to build homes and start farms. In those days, people saw so many trees around them that they could not believe the trees could ever run out.

In a few short years after the Gold Rush, only a small part of the redwood forest was left. Some people worried that it would be lost forever and worked hard to save the trees and the forest. Today, thanks to their work, much of the last ancient redwood forest is protected in parks. But the rest of the redwood forest still can be cut down for wood or to make way for new houses.

Save the Redwoods League knows that past **climate change** was a serious danger to coast redwoods. Many scientists worry that warmer temperatures will decrease the coastal fog that redwoods need so much. The League is leading an effort to study redwoods and climate change so that we can keep protecting these amazing forests.

About Save the Redwoods League

Since 1918, Save the Redwoods League has protected redwood forests so that people can be inspired by these precious natural wonders—now and in the future. The League and its partners help people of all ages experience these majestic trees through the forestlands we have helped protect and restore, the many education programs we sponsor and our Web site.



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