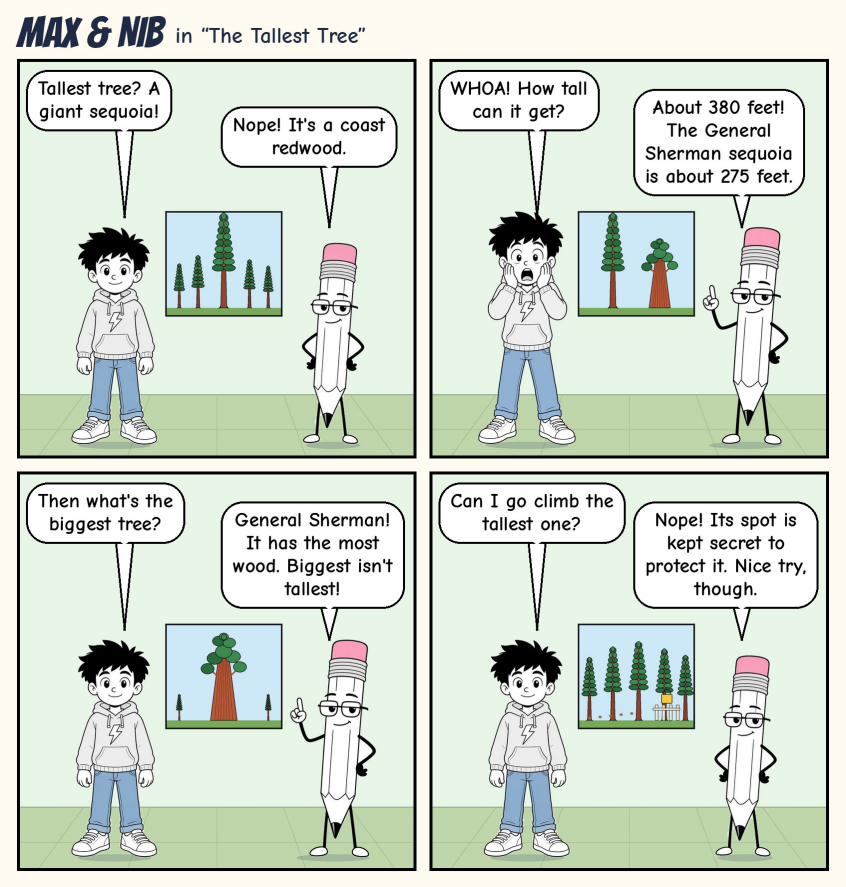


Name: _____ Date: _____

What's the Tallest Tree in the World?

Earth & Life Science · Grades 3–6 · About 15 minutes · Max & Nib

Cool facts

What is the tallest tree in the world? It is the coast redwood, from foggy Northern California. Coast redwoods can grow as tall as about 380 feet (Save the Redwoods League). The tallest one known is nicknamed Hyperion. Its exact spot is kept quiet to protect it from trampling feet. The biggest tree is a giant sequoia called the General Sherman Tree. It has more wood than any other tree, but it is about 275 feet tall (National Park Service). So the tallest redwoods are about 105 feet taller. Biggest does not always mean tallest! (Tree heights change a little as trees grow.)

Cool Fact Fog gives redwoods about **40%** of their water in summer! (NPS)

Cool Fact A coast redwood starts from a seed no bigger than a **tomato seed**! (National Park Service)

Questions

1. What kind of tree is the tallest in the world?

2. Which tree has the most wood in its trunk, and about how tall is it?

3. Why is the exact spot of the tallest redwood kept quiet?

4. The tallest redwoods are about 380 feet tall. General Sherman is about 275 feet tall. About how many feet taller are the tallest redwoods?

Show your work

Write about it

Would you rather visit the tallest tree or the biggest tree? Explain why.

What's the Tallest Tree in the World? — Answer Key

Grades 3–6 · For teacher or parent use

Answers

1. What kind of tree is the tallest in the world?

   The coast redwood.

2. Which tree has the most wood in its trunk, and about how tall is it?

   The General Sherman Tree (a giant sequoia). It is about 275 feet tall.

3. Why is the exact spot of the tallest redwood kept quiet?

   To protect it from trampling. Visitors had trampled the plants around it.

4. The tallest redwoods are about 380 feet tall. General Sherman is about 275 feet tall. About how many feet taller are the tallest redwoods?

   About 105 feet (380 − 275 = 105).

Writing prompt: Would you rather visit the tallest tree or the biggest tree? Explain why.
Accept any reasoned answer for the writing prompt. For adults: Save the Redwoods League says coast redwoods (Sequoia sempervirens) grow as high as about 380 feet. The National Park Service lists the General Sherman Tree in Sequoia National Park at 274.9 feet tall and about 52,500 cubic feet in volume, the largest tree by volume in the world. NPS has closed the area around Hyperion because visitors trampled and damaged the habitat. Published measurements of Hyperion have crept up over the years (about 379 feet in 2006 and a little over 380 feet in later measurements), so “about 380 feet” is used here.

Sources

- Save the Redwoods League: Coast Redwoods — https://www.savetheredwoods.org/explore/learn-about-redwoods/coast-redwoods/
- National Park Service: About the Trees (Redwood National and State Parks) — https://www.nps.gov/redw/learn/nature/about-the-trees.htm
- National Park Service: Should I Hike to Hyperion? — https://www.nps.gov/redw/planyourvisit/hyperion.htm
- National Park Service: The General Sherman Tree — https://www.nps.gov/seki/learn/nature/sherman.htm

Word Record **Trunk volume**: how much space a tree’s trunk takes up. It is how scientists decide which tree is the “biggest.”

Cool Fact General Sherman’s trunk weighs nearly **1,400 tons**, about as much as 15 adult blue whales! (National Park Service)