

We can learn a lot by studying tree rings. The thickness of the yearly ring tells us about the conditions where the tree lived. Some years the rings are very thick. From this we might hypothesize that conditions for growing were excellent and the tree was getting plenty of sunshine and moisture. Other years, the rings are thin and close together. This tells us conditions were not as good. Perhaps there was a drought or the forest was too thick and there was not enough rainfall or sunlight reaching the tree. Learning about trees this way is called dendrochronology. *Dendro* means tree, *chronology* means time. Examine the tree rings below and answer the questions to learn more about this tree.

How old do you think the tree was? _____

Wet Year

The marks on the left side of the tree are called fire scars. They tell us that a fire burned the forest where this tree lived.

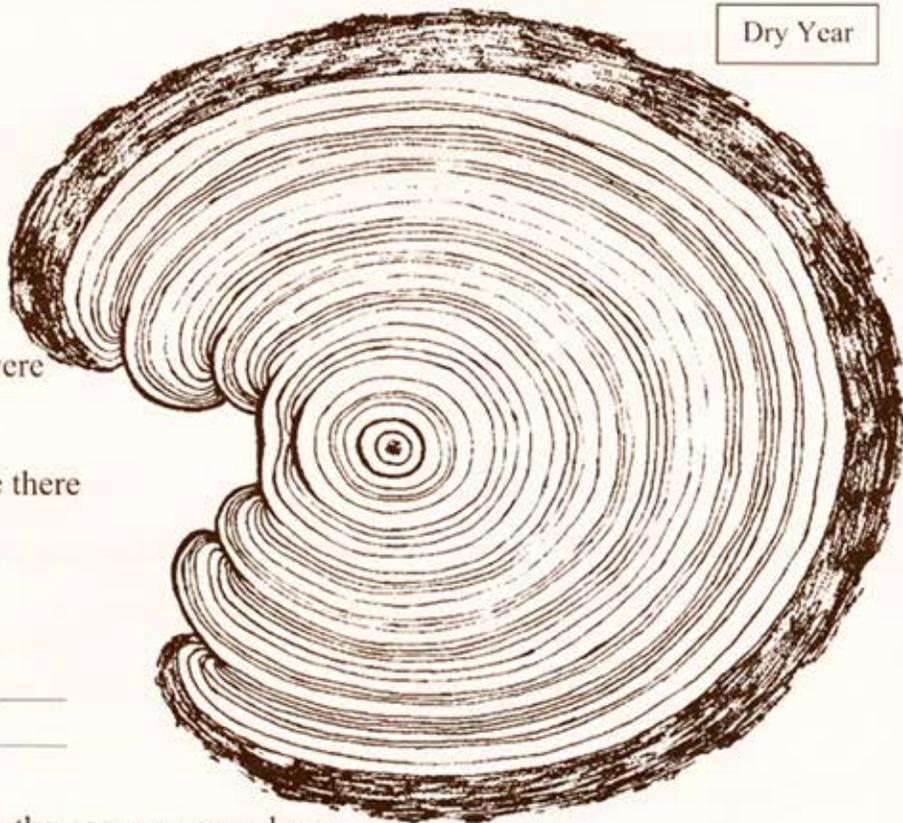
Dry Year

How many forest fires did the tree live through? _____

Approximately how many years were between the fires? _____

How old was the tree the first time there was a forest fire? _____

Look at the thick bark of the tree. How does thick bark help protect the tree? _____



Draw an arrow to the ring marking the year you were born.

Take a close look at the tree rings. Draw a line from the words "wet year" to a place on the tree that shows when the tree was getting plenty of sunshine and moisture.

Draw a line from the words "dry year" to a place on the tree that shows when the tree was stressed or not getting enough moisture. How many times do you think the tree may have gone through a time of stress? _____