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Strategies in Literacy Using Children’s Literature

“The earth was naked. For me the mission was to try to cover it with green.” Wangari Mahthai

Wangari Maathai grew up in Kenya. The country was lush with green trees and crops. Maathai went away to college in the United States. While she was away Kenya’s landscape was stripped bare. Commercial plantations were inserted. Maathai formed the Green Belt Movement after she arrived back into Kenya. This movement was made up of a group of women who worked to get everyone to plant trees in Kenya. Children, soldiers, everyone brought hope to Kenya.

Planting the Trees of Kenya will help children to see how the power of a simple idea can hold if it is followed through with work and determination. Planting the trees in Kenya helped to give the people of Kenya a better life.

Different versions of the book for different grade levels:

Wangari’s Trees of Peace –A true story from Africa by Jeanette Winter

Mama Miti by Donna Jo Napoli

Planting the Trees of Kenya—The Story of Wangari Maathai by Claire A. Nivola

Seeds of Change by Jen Cullerton Johnson

2009 interview with Wangari Maathai ([www.nobelprize.org](http://www.nobelprize.org))

\*A variety of lesson plans can be found on the Internet for any of the books about the trees of Kenya.

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What are the trees of peace?

How did she get the women to help her?

Why plant trees in Kenya?

Where had Wangaai been?

Whose story is being told?

Nobel Peace Prize

Green Belt Movement

What is the main idea?

Why does it matter now?