

What is a rain forest?

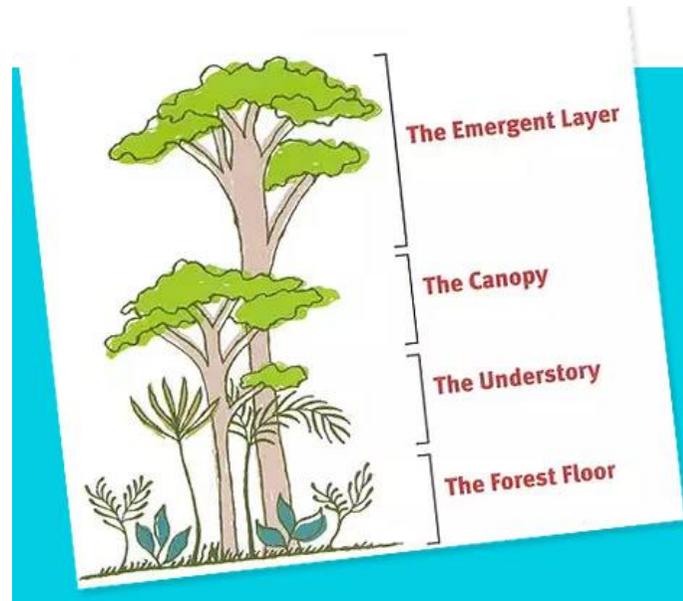
Rainforests are really big forests that get a lot of rain. They are found in all continents of the world apart from Antarctica (it's far too cold there). There are two types of rainforest: tropical (in the tropical, warm zone near the Equator) and temperate (in the temperate zone further away from the Equator). Most rainforests are tropical, with tall trees, warm climates (weather patterns), and lots of rain. It can rain one inch of rain per day in some rainforests! The largest of these is the Amazon Rainforest in South America.

Why are Rainforest so important?

Rainforests do a few things that are super-important to our life on Earth. One is that they use photosynthesis to take in carbon dioxide and make oxygen which we need to breathe and survive. This is why they are called 'The Lungs of The Earth'. They also help keep our weather system stable by absorbing carbon dioxide, creating rainfall and keeping temperature stable. They also affect the water cycle as they hold so much water which condenses into the atmosphere. So, how can we manage without them?

Timeline of events for the Amazon Rainforest

1972	Trans – Amazon highway opens. The road goes through the Amazon Rain Forest and Brazil.
1980	Gold deposits at Serra Pelada in the Amazon Rain Forest is discovered.
1986	An estimated 42 tones of gold are extracted from a giant mine. The Amazon gold rush is in full swing.
2005	Worst drought in 50 years hits the Amazon. Lakes and streams dry up.
2010	More droughts hit the Amazon.
2013	Researchers estimate there are 390 billion trees in the Amazon. These are divided into 16000 different species.



Vocabulary

habitat	The home of an animal or a plant.
Canopy	Is a layer of thick vegetation, where trees overlap at about 30 – 45 meters high.
Amazon	The Amazon rainforest has a warm, wet, and dense environment due to which millions of plant and animal species are found there.
Deforestation	The clearing of trees, transforming a wooded area into cleared land.
Rainfall	The amount of rain which falls.
Temperature	Tells us the hotness or coldness of a country. This can be measured using a thermometer.
Forest floor	Is a dark and damp place, home to ferns, fungi and moss.
Endangered	Is any type of plant or animal that is in danger of disappearing forever.
Emergent layer	Is the name given to the tops of trees that poke up above the rainforest canopy. It is very sunny here and only the strongest and tallest plants reach this level.
Understory	Lies between the Canopy layer, where there is plenty of sunlight, and the Forest Floor layer, where there is almost none.
climate	Is the average measurements of temperature, wind, humidity, snow, and rain in a place over the course of years.

Fun facts

2% of the Earth's surface is covered in rain forest.

About 30 million species of plants and animals live in the rain forest.

Many of the foods we love come from the rain forest. Chocolate, pineapple and cinnamon all come from rain forests. Rubber and medicines also come from rain forests.

Not much light reaches the rain forest floor. In fact, the ground is often bare. The soil here is often hard and lacking in nutrients.

Over 50,000,000 people in rain forests. These people live in tribes and depend on the rain forest for shelter and food.

Famous Rain forest Animals



Sloths
Sloths are nocturnal mammals and are known for being particularly slow-moving creatures.

The emerald tree boa is a non-venomous snake, which is often found in the Amazon rainforest.



The red-eyed tree frog is just one of many species of frog that lives in the rainforest.

The scarlet macaw is one of at least 17 known species of macaws. Most are intelligent, social birds.



Famous Rain Forest Plants

Rubber Tree
Growing around 40m, the rubber tree produces sap called latex which is used to make rubber



The coffee plant is a shrub that can grow to over 9m. Each berry has 2 beans inside. They start off green until they are roasted. Coffee plants can live for 100 years!

The brazil nut tree towers over its neighbours as it can reach 50m high. The nut is made inside the fruit the size of a tennis ball.

