

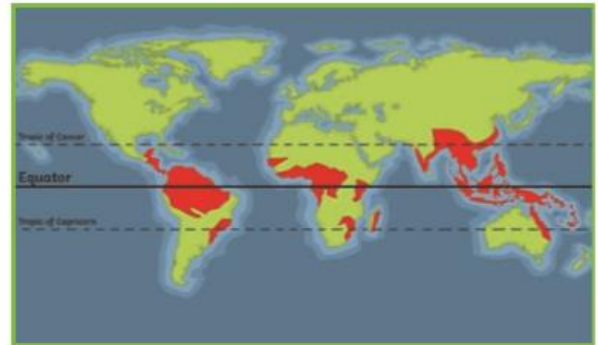


Rainforests

Children will learn about tropical rainforests around the world but with a particular focus on The Amazon rainforest. They will compare a British forest (Thetford) with the Amazon rainforest, and begin to explore some of the conservation issues surrounding the destruction of rainforest habitats. They will explore the layers of the forest and its animal inhabitants, to the unique climate found in the tropics.

Global Distribution of Tropical Rainforests

- Most of the world's tropical rainforests lie between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
- Tropical rainforests are found on either side of the equator in South America, Central Africa, South East Asia and Northern Australia.
- The world's largest tropical rainforest (the Amazon) is found in South America.



Physical Characteristics of a Tropical Rainforest

Climate	Water	Soils	Plants	Animals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hot (20-28°C) • Sun is overhead all year round so there is no seasonal variation. • wet (2000mm per year) • Convectional rainfall every day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roots of plants take up water from the ground. • Rain is intercepted as it falls - much of it at the canopy level, this will evaporate as it heats up to form convectional rainfall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain washes away nutrients from soil. • Soil is not very fertile. • Humus layer of rotting leaf-fall is very thin (heat speeds up decomposition). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most trees are evergreen. • Continual growing season. • Five layers: forest floor, shrub layer, under-canopy, canopy (30m) and emergent. • Epiphytes (plants that feed off other plants and take moisture from the air) e.g. ferns. • Absorb CO2 and release oxygen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many species of animals live in the tropical rainforest. • Food is plentiful and grows all year. • Hundreds of different types of monkeys, snakes and birds. • Thousands of insect species live in the tropical rainforest.

Structure of a Tropical Rainforest

Emergent Layer (50m)

- tallest trees

Canopy (30m)

- engine of the rainforest
- captures most sunlight

Understorey (20m)

- younger trees

Shrub Layer (2-5m)

- ferns, bushes etc.

Forest Floor (0m)

- dark and quiet
- decomposition.
- sometimes flooded

Vocabulary

Amazon, Brazil, climate, conservation, deforestation, diverse, ecosystem, endangered, environment, equator, extinct, fern, forest, habitat, humid, layers (emergent, species, canopy, understorey, shrub, floor), Madagascar, rainfall, rainforest, South America, sustainable, temperature, tribe, tropic of Cancer/Capricorn



Causes of deforestation

- ranching
- logging
- farming
- mining (iron ore)
- road building