



# Rain Forest Exploration in the Classroom

## Pre- and Post-Visit Activities

Tropical rain forests are hot, humid and wet. They are characterized by receiving at least 80 inches of rain per year; some receive over 200 inches. Temperatures are warm and consistent, usually 70-80 degrees F. Tropical rain forests cover less than seven percent of the earth's land surface, yet scientists estimate they are home to over half of the world's living species of plants and animals.

### Teacher Objectives:

Students will know...

1. Where the tropical rain forests of the world can be found and what the climate is like.
2. The different layers of the tropical rain forest - forest floor, understory, canopy, and emergent.
3. There is great biodiversity (variety of life) in tropical rain forests and some specific examples of animals that live there.
4. Adaptations that help animals to survive in the tropical rain forest.

### Pre-Visit Activities:

#### Rain Forest Inhabitants (Grades 2-8)

Download the "Select Rain Forest Animals at the Denver Zoo" at [www.denverzoo.org/teacher](http://www.denverzoo.org/teacher). Have students choose an animal that they may want to research:

- Where does the animal live in the world?
- What layer of the rain forest does the animal call home?
- What kinds of things does it eat?
- What adaptations does it have to help it survive in the rain forest?

After completing their research, students can do a brief classroom presentation or can serve as "tour guides" while at the zoo with their chaperones. When they find their research animals in an exhibit, they can tell everyone all about them!

**Standards: Reading and Writing 1, 2, and 5, Science 1**

#### Let It Rain! (Grade K-8)

For this activity, all you need are two large tape measurers. One will be for students to measure out the average rainfall per year in Colorado (15.4"), and the other will be to measure out the average annual rainfall in the Amazon Rain Forest (85"). Have four students hold the tape measurers and stand side by side for effect. You may also want to point out where the Amazon Rain Forest is located on a map.

**Standards: Math 1 and 3, Science 4.2**



## Post-Visit Activities:

### Rain Forest Resources (Grade 3-8)

- ❑ Using pictures, props, or the real products, have students match a resource from the rain forest with a product we may use in every day life.

*Examples:*

pineapple/orange	pineapple/orange juice
wood (tree)	furniture
coffee beans	ground coffee
eucalyptus	cough drops
vanilla bean	vanilla for cooking
cinnamon bark	cinnamon spice
cocoa	chocolate bar
coconut	coconut shavings
photo of bauxite mining	aluminum can

- ❑ You may want to include some photos of harvesting rubber trees and cacao plants or copper mining. Feel free to come up with some of your own products.
- ❑ Lead a discussion with students on why we need the rain forests, and how we can help save them.

*Extension:* Have students break up into groups and come up with an ad campaign to save the rain forest. They should have a slogan and make a poster to be displayed around the school.

**Standards: Science 5, Geography 5**

### Build-a-Biome (Grade K-5)

(adapted from “A Walk in the Rainforest”: A Sharing Nature With Children Series)

Have students brainstorm what they would need to do to change the classroom into a rain forest. You may want to designate a specific wall, or turn the entire room into a rain forest!

- ❑ How would they create the different layers?
- ❑ What kinds of animals would be found in each layer? (have students draw the animals or bring in stuffed animals)
- ❑ What are the four components of a habitat that every animal needs to survive (food, water, shelter, space)? Make sure all of these needs are met.
- ❑ What adaptations do the animals and plants that live up in the canopy and the emergent layers need to survive?
- ❑ What about the animals and plants that live on the forest floor or in the understory?

*Extension:* Read The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry. What animals depend on the kapok tree in the rain forest? You could make the center of your “classroom rain forest” the kapok tree and build around it. Give each student a few construction paper leaves. Have them write on each leaf how a friend, parent, teacher, etc. has helped them fulfill their needs, whether it be a hug, food, or help with their homework. Put all the leaves up and discuss with your students how “friendship is like a sheltering tree”. Talk to them about how they are connected to others, just like all of the animals in the rain forest.

**Standards: Science 3.1, 3.4, Reading and Writing 6**



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