

Year 5 The Amazon Basin

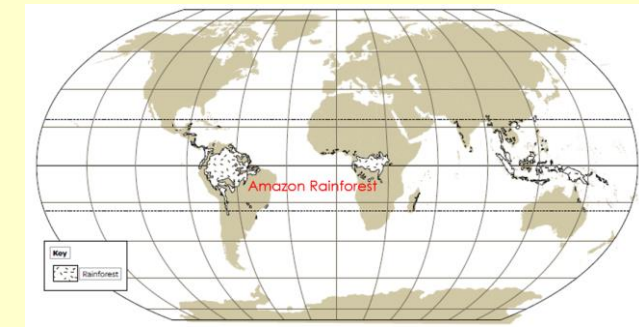
Spring 1

topic vocabulary

agriculture	farming
equatorial	the hot, wet climate in areas close to the equator
tributary	smaller rivers that flow into a larger one
river basin:	the area of land near to a river and all its tributaries
biodiversity	the variety of life on earth
ecosystem	a community of living things, together with their environment
humidity	moisture in the air
trade	the act of buying and selling goods
urban	having to do with a city or town
tropical	happening near the equator



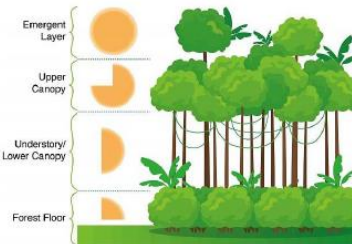
Countries of South America



The Amazon Rainforest

The trees of the Amazon absorb carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. In fact, they produce 20% [or 1/5] of all the world's oxygen! The Amazon is one of the most biodiverse places on earth. Scientists believe there are many more species of plants and animals living there that we haven't even discovered yet.

Rainforests are a kind of forest habitat that can be found in warm places. They are full of tall trees and leafy plants. It is called a 'rainforest' because it also gets a lot of rain every year, helping all the plants grow.



Tribes in Amazon Rainforest

The Amazon is one of the few places in the world where tribes live. They have often never had contact with the outside world. They have to survive on what they find in the forest. They hunt for their own food and grow crops. They move around every few years to find fertile land. Children help from a very early age.

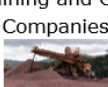


Manaus - a rainforest city

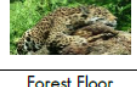


Deforestation and why it is happening

Deforestation
- The rainforests used to cover 14% of the Earth's land surface, but now they cover only 6%.
- It is estimated that 137 rainforest species are becoming extinct every day.
- 500 years ago, there were believed to be at least 6,000,000 native tribespeople. Now there are thought to be just 250,000.

Logging 	Trees are cut down to sell and make furniture with. They are also turned into charcoal. Huge areas of forest are cut down in one go. Roads are created which causes even more damage.
Cattle Ranching 	Forests are being burned down to make way for cattle farming, supplying beef to the rest of the world. Soil soon becomes dry and cattle farmers have to move on leaving a trail of destruction behind.
Mining and Oil Companies 	The demand for minerals and metals such as oil, aluminium, copper, gold and diamonds mean that rainforests are destroyed to access the ground below. Chemicals used can often end up in rivers, polluting water supplies.
Dams 	Large dams are used to help with the creation of electricity. This is seen as 'clean' energy but has resulted in the flooding of large areas of rainforest.

Layers of the Rainforests

Emergent Layer 	This layer receives the most sunlight and plenty of rain. It is very windy here and trees can rise to 70m in height. There are plenty of animals such as birds and monkeys in this layer (e.g. scarlet macaws, harpy eagles, canary-winged parakeets, morpho butterflies and capuchin/squirrel monkeys).
Upper Canopy 	This layer still gets plenty of sunlight and rain but it is less windy. Wide leaves and thicker branches create a roof which stops light getting to lower layers. It is home to a range of wildlife (e.g. toucans, sloths, howler monkeys, iguanas and tree snakes).
Understory / Lower Canopy 	This layer only gets a small amount of light and is a damp and warm environment filled with smaller shrubs and trees which provide shelter and food for other animals (e.g. tree frogs, jaguars and the praying mantis).
Forest Floor 	This layer is dark, damp and very warm with virtually no sunlight reaching the floor. Leaves fall to the floor and start to rot. It is filled with rodents, insects and insect-eating animals (e.g. click beetles, worms, giant centipedes, giant anteaters and leaf-cutter ants).

The city of Manaus is the capital of the Amazonas state in the north of Brazil. It's the largest city within the Amazon Rainforest with a population of 2 million region. It sits on the Rio Negro, one of two major rivers that flow into the River Amazon. Manaus is located just 3° south of the Equator and has a tropical climate. Manaus was originally built using money made from selling rubber from rubber trees in the forest. It is now home to factories making things for the rest of Brazil eg soap, mobile phones, motorbikes and ships. It has a tropical climate

The Amazon River

It is the second longest river in the world [4,048 miles]. Its source is in Peru and its mouth is on the east coast of Brazil. It flows through Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia. It is important because it provides huge amounts of water for plants to grow. The Amazon is home to humans too. They build their homes along the banks of the river and use it for travelling, washing their clothes, drinking and cooking