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Wonders of the Rainforest Resource Book



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Publications



Contents

Contents.....	3	Rainforest Wildlife	35
Learning About Rainforests	5	Creature Feature	36
What is a Biome?	6	Talkin' Toucans	37
The Earth's Ecoregions	7	Magic Macaws	38
Where are these Ecoregions found?	10	Interesting Insects	39
The Rainforest Biome	11	Scary Spiders	40
Rainforests Around the World	12	Freaky Fish Alert!	41
Where are the Rainforests?	13	Tropical Mammals	42
Layers of the Rainforests?	14	Rainforest Reptiles	43
Features of Forests	16	Rainforest Reptiles	44
Why are Rainforests Important?	17	Slimy Amphibians	45
Plants and Energy	18	Fearless Frogs	46
Plants and Energy	19	Colourful Creatures	47
Rainforests and Water	20	Animal Tactics	48
Rainforests and the Atmosphere	21	The Rainforest Food Web	50
The Greenhouse Effect	22	People of the Rainforest	51
Clearing the Rainforests	23	People of the Rainforest: Congo	52
Rainforest Plants	24	People of the Rainforest: Africa	53
Air Plants	25	People of the Rainforest:	54
Climbing Plants	26	Papua New Guinea	54
A Range of Roots	27	People of the Rainforest: Australia	55
Carnivorous Rainforest Plants	28	People of the Rainforest: Australia	56
More Mean Plants	29	People of the Amazon Region	57
Unusual Rainforest Plants	30	People of the Amazon Region	58
Unusual Rainforest Plants	31	Rainforests Under Threat	59
Fruits of the Forest	32	Saving the Rainforests	60
Marvellous Medicines	33	Read about Rainforests Online	61
Forest Nasties and Goodies	34		



Learning About Rainforests



Have you ever wondered exactly what a rainforest is and how it works? For example, does it rain all the time, is it hot or is it cold? Can people live in these forests? Where on earth are rainforests found? What is a biome? No idea? Well read on!

How much do you really know about rainforests? Do you imagine that the forest floor of a rainforest is a mass of tangled vines and jungle? Well, you may be surprised to learn that most rainforests have hardly any vegetation growing on their forest floors at all. Plants find it hard to grow there because the other layers of the rainforest have blocked out most of the sunlight and sometimes the rain as well! Because of the darkness, most plants are not able to grow in such regions.

You may also be surprised to learn that rainforests play a very important role in the earth's **ecosystem** by recycling water and cleaning the air.

And, did you know that more than half of the entire animal species on the planet call the rainforest their home? Amazing really – especially when you realise that rainforests cover only a tiny fraction of the earth's land surface.



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This book contains info on:

- rainforest locations
- rainforest features
- layers of a rainforest
- fruits of the forest
- people of the forest
- rainforest wildlife
- rainforest plants
- what is happening to the rainforests
- how you can help the rainforests



Read on to learn all about rainforests, as well as some of the other ecoregions or biomes that are found on our wonderful planet.



What is a Biome?

A **biome** is a geographic area on the earth's surface that has a unique set of characteristics. Each biome has a certain type of **climate** and contains certain living things (e.g. plants and animals). There are many different biomes around the globe, each with its own unique life forms and different environments.

Scientists have studied the biomes of our earth and have discovered that there are hundreds of different **ecoregions** around the globe that are all special in their own way. In this book we have grouped these regions into seven basic kinds of biomes:

1. Tundra
2. Taiga
3. Grasslands
4. Temperate Forest
5. Rainforest
6. Deserts
7. Aquatic

Biomes that occur on land are called **terrestrial** biomes.

Aquatic biomes include wetlands, freshwater regions such as ponds, lakes and rivers and marine regions such as coral reefs, estuaries and oceans.

CLIMATE



The climate refers to the weather patterns, the temperature, the amount of light and moisture in the air.

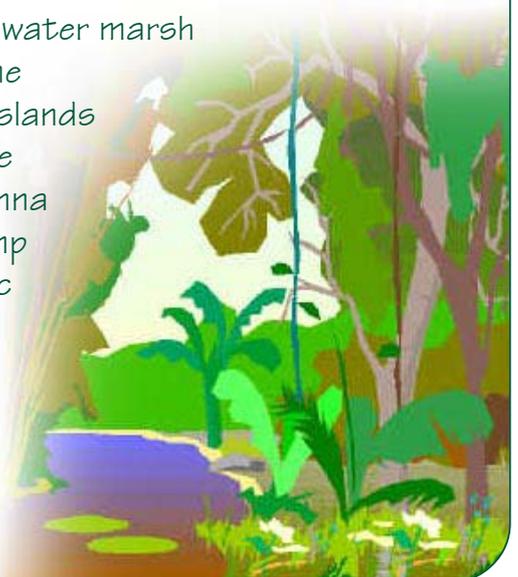
There are many different types of climates around the world.

Check out:

► www.enchantedlearning.com/biomes

How many of these biomes have you heard of?

- Desert
- Tundra
- Coniferous forest (taiga)
- Deciduous forest
- Wetlands
- Tropical rainforest
- Temperate rainforest
- Mountains
- Caves
- Scrub forest
- Freshwater marsh
- Marine
- Grasslands
- Prairie
- Savanna
- Swamp
- Arctic

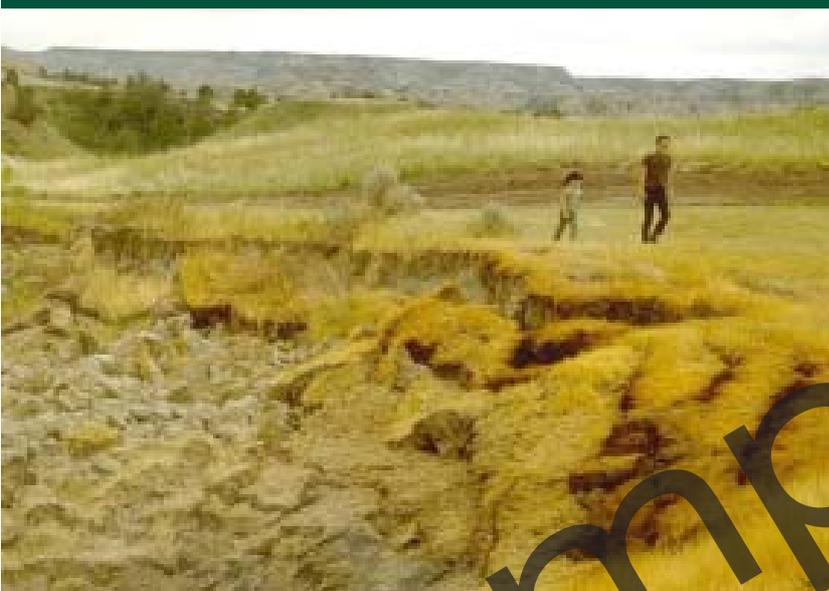




The Earth's Ecoregions

GRASSLANDS

- Tropical grasslands (savanna)
- Temperate grasslands



- ▶ **Temperature**
Warm to hot and often with a cold season
- ▶ **Water**
Wet season, dry season
- ▶ **Soil Type**
Fertile
- ▶ **Plants**
Grasses and some bushes, no trees
- ▶ **Animals**
Wide variety of mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and spiders.

DESERT

- Hot and dry ● Semi-arid
- Coastal ● Cold



- ▶ **Temperature**
Very hot or very cold
- ▶ **Water**
Almost none
- ▶ **Soil Type**
Dry and poor quality
- ▶ **Plants**
Hardly any vegetation. Some small shrubs and succulent plants (e.g. cactus) are able to survive the harsh climate.
- ▶ **Animals**
Burrowing animals such as kangaroo rats. Also mammals (coyotes, dingoes, rabbits, mice and foxes) and some species of reptiles, insects and birds.

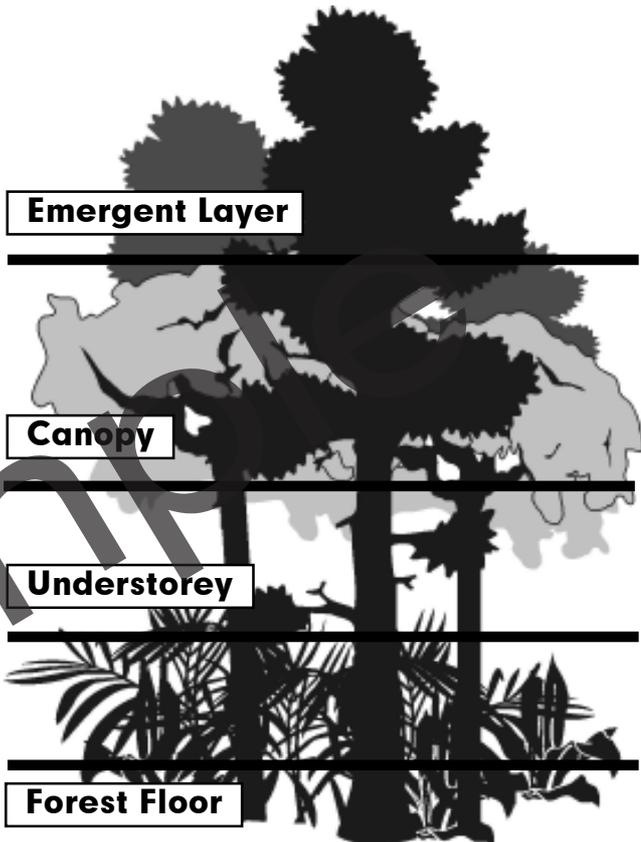
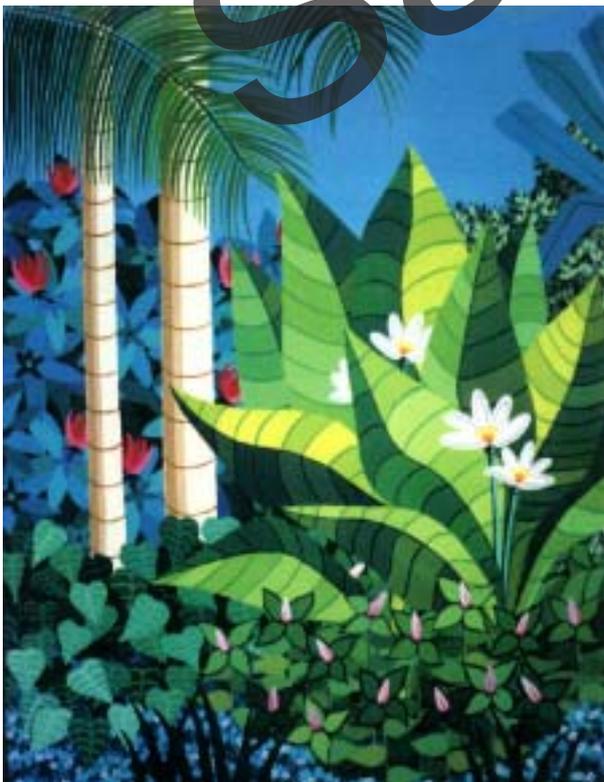


Layers of the Rainforests?

A RAINFOREST HAS DIFFERENT LAYERS OF PLANT GROWTH THAT ARE SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS STRATAS. THEY INCLUDE:

The Emergent Layer

Taller than all the other plants in the forests are giant trees called **emergent** trees, which grow to heights of 35 to 75 metres. They have small leaves, umbrella-shaped crowns and tall slender trunks. The trees of a tropical rainforest stay green all year round.



The Canopy

The next layer, the **canopy**, is like a thick green carpet. This layer is made up of flat-topped trees that grow to 20 to 30 metres in height. The leaves of these trees block out a lot of the sunlight making some areas of the rainforest quite dark.