

Animals of the Rain Forest

Tropical rain forests¹ are warm, rainy places. The toucan lives in the leafy trees of some tropical rain forests. Its beak can be different colors. Keep reading to learn about other animals that live in rain forests.

Life in a Rain Forest



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Macaws live in the tallest trees, which make up the emergent layer.

Tropical rain forests are home to more kinds of plants and animals than any other place in the world. A rain forest has four layers. Read about the layers of the rain forest and some animals that live there.

Emergent Layer

The tops of the tallest trees in the rain forest make up the **emergent layer**.² Macaws live in this part of the rain forest. Macaws are birds with long tails and strong beaks. They belong to the parrot family.

Canopy

The tops of most of the trees in the rain forest make up the **canopy**.³ The canopy blocks sunlight from reaching the areas of the rain forest below. Spider monkeys live here. Spider monkeys eat fruits, seeds, and other

¹ **tropical rain forest:** a woodland with a high yearly rainfall and very tall trees

² **emergent layer:** forest trees that are taller than the trees around them

³ **canopy:** layer of the forest formed by the tops of trees

plants. These monkeys hang from trees by their tails and swing from branch to branch.

Understory

The **understory**⁴ of the rain forest is a cool, shady place. Plants that grow here have large leaves. Some anacondas live in the understory. Anacondas are one of the largest snakes in the world, reaching more than 15 feet long. They are **nocturnal**.⁵ That means they are most active at night.

Forest Floor

The forest floor is very dark and wet. Few plants grow on the floor. Many large animals live in this part of the rain forest, such as jaguars. Jaguars are wild cats that live in the rain forests of Central and North America.



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Jaguars roam the rain forest floor.

⁴ **understory:** the layer of plants and trees between the forest canopy and the forest floor

⁵ **nocturnal:** awake at night and sleeping during the day

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Answer the following four questions based on the information in the passage.

1. What is a tropical rain forest?

2. What are the four layers of the rain forest?

3. Based on the passage, describe one animal that lives in each of the four layers of the rain forest.

4. What is this passage mostly about?

Directions: Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

At night, anacondas are the most active because they are nocturnal animals.

What? anacondas

5. (are) What?

6. When?

7. Why?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

In a rainforest, jaguars live on the forest floor, _____ macaws inhabit the emergent layer.

- A but
- B because
- C so

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

Vocabulary Word: **species** (spe · cies): a type of plant or animal.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **species**.
- a. There are many different types of jellyfish, but only one species goes to the bottom of the aquarium's tank and stays there.
 - b. One species or type of bird builds their nests high up in trees to protect their eggs.
 - c. The one species of butterflies migrate south in the winter.
 - d. Pandas are one example of an endangered species.
 - e. There are one species of insects, called termites that destroy the wood in houses.

10. Dogs are most closely related to which species?



Teacher Guide and Answer Key

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 720

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive - the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: The passage describes what the tropical rain forests are, what animals are found in the forests, and what the four layers of a rain forest are.

To the Teacher: Read the passage aloud to the class [TIP: while reading aloud, show the passage on a whiteboard or give each student a copy of the passage so they can follow along].

Then, use the text-dependent questions 1-8 to facilitate a whole class discussion to ensure students comprehend the key details from the passage.

Finally, use questions 9-10 to deep teach one important vocabulary word [TIP: you can use the model provided for teaching additional vocabulary].

1. What is a tropical rain forest? [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: A tropical rain forest is a warm and rainy place with many tall trees. It is home to many of the world's plant and animal species. [paragraphs 1, 2]

2. What are the four layers of the rain forest? [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: According to the article, there are four layers of the tropical rain forest. The lowest layer is the forest floor which is very dark and wet. The next layer up is the understory or lower branches that are a cool and shady place. The next layer up is the canopy or the tops of the shorter trees that blocks the sunlight from reaching the forest floor. The highest layer is the emergent layer or the tops of the tallest trees. [paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6]

3. Based on the passage, describe one animal that lives in each of the four layers of the rain forest. [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: Macaws, birds with long tails and strong beaks, live in the emergent layer. Spider monkeys live in the canopy layer. Anacondas, which are the largest snakes in the world, live in the understory layer. Jaguars are wild cats that live on the forest floor. [paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6]

4. What is this passage mostly about? [Main Idea]

Suggested answer: The article is mainly about the tropical rain forest. There are four layers of the rain forest and there are many different animals that make the rain forest their home.

Directions: Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

At night, anacondas are the most active because they are nocturnal animals.

What? anacondas

5. (are) What? **the most active**

6. When? **at night**

7. Why? **because they are nocturnal animals**

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

In a rainforest, jaguars live on the forest floor, _____ macaws inhabit the emergent layer.

A but

B because

C so

To the Teacher: ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: **species** (spe · cies): types of plants or animals.

Step 1: Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (spe · cies)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is species. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "Species."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Species are types of plants or animals."
- b. Teacher says: "The word species is used when talking about types of plants or animals. In this passage, the author discusses how many species of plants and animals live in the rain forest."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "Species."]

Step 3: Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the first sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

Vocabulary Word: **species** (spe · cies): a type of plant or animal.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **species**.
- a. There are many different types of jellyfish, but only one species goes to the bottom of the aquarium's tank and stays there.
 - b. One species or type of bird builds their nests high up in trees to protect their eggs.
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 - d. Pandas are one example of an endangered species.
 - e. There are one species of insects, called termites that destroy the wood in houses.

Step 4: Check for student understanding

To the Teacher: This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

10. Dogs are most closely related to which species?



Suggested Additional Vocabulary: emergent layer, canopy layer, understory layer, forest floor, nocturnal