



KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

GEOGRAPHY: What is it like in the Amazon?

Y5 SUMMER TERM

KEY VOCABULARY:	
WORDS	MEANING
Continent, country, region	an area that is defined by certain unifying characteristics, which may be physical, human, or cultural
Human features	created by humans, e.g. roads, houses, canals
Location vocabulary	e.g. longitude, latitude, Tropic of Capricorn, north, east, south, west
Physical features	naturally occurring e.g. rivers, mountains
Primary source	information from the actual time, place or event, e.g. photos, video, eye-witness accounts
Secondary source	a source which presents information originally presented elsewhere, e.g. a school textbook, and encyclopaedia etc
Rainforest	a tropical forest which has a high annual rainfall
River	a natural watercourse, flowing towards the sea, an ocean or a lake.

KEY KNOWLEDGE:

QUESTION 1: What is the Amazon and where is it located?

ANSWER

The Amazon Rainforest is located in 9 different countries but the majority of it (around 60%) is located in Brazil. The rest of it can be found in Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana (which is technically an overseas territory). While in theory you have 9 different places to experience the Amazon, realistically those who want to explore the rainforest will want to base themselves in one of the following countries: Brazil, Peru, Bolivia or Ecuador. These countries have an excellent infrastructure for visitors to the Amazon, so you won't need to worry about trying to navigate through on your own and getting lost. In fact, in many places travelers aren't allowed into the rainforest unless they are accompanied by a guide as the chances of getting lost are pretty high and the risk of encountering a dangerous animal is certainly not non-existent. Being the largest rainforest on the planet (and home to one of the largest river systems), it should come as no surprise that the Amazon covers a hefty chunk of South America. This gigantic patch of natural beauty stretches itself over a staggering 2.1 million square miles.

QUESTION 2: What is the climate like in the Amazon?

ANSWER

In general, tropical rainforests have hot and humid climates where it rains virtually everyday. The level of rainfall depends on the time of year. Temperatures vary through the year - but much less than the rainfall.

QUESTION 3: How are Amazon animals adapted to its climate?

ANSWER

Animals adapt to the rainforest by living in areas that maximize their ability to find food and protection. For example, sloths require minimal food, hang in trees in the canopy of the rainforest and move very slowly. The combination of green algae infiltrating their fur and their slow pace makes it difficult for predators to see them. Other animals survive by feeding on food not widely eaten by other species, thereby lessening the direct competition for food in some instances. Although toucans and macaws eat berries, their strong hard beaks make it easy for them to crack hard nuts that other animals may have difficulty eating. Some animals survive because they are so poisonous that other animals instinctively stay away from them. Usually poisonous animals are among the prettiest and have vibrant colors.



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QUESTION 4: How is the Amazon being damaged?

ANSWER

Every year an area of rainforest the size of New Jersey is cut down and destroyed. The plants and animals that used to live in these forests either die or must find a new forest to call their home. Why are rainforests being destroyed? Humans are the main cause of rainforest destruction. We are cutting down rainforests for many reasons, including:

- wood for both timber and making fires;
- agriculture for both small and large farms;
- land for poor farmers who don't have anywhere else to live;
- grazing land for cattle;
- pulp for making paper;
- road construction; and
- extraction of minerals and energy.

Rainforests are also threatened by climate change, which is contributing to droughts in parts of the Amazon and Southeast Asia. Drought causes die-offs of trees and dries out leaf litter, increasing the risk of forest fires, which are often set by land developers, ranchers, plantation owners, and loggers. In 2005 and 2010 the Amazon experienced the worst droughts ever recorded. Rivers dried up, isolating communities, and millions of acres burned. The smoke caused widespread health problems, interfered with transportation, and blocked the formation of rain clouds, while the burning contributed huge amounts of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, worsening the effects of climate change.

RELATED INFORMATION:

MAP OF THE AMAZON



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