

61 - Rainforest

Did you know scientists estimate there are up to 50 million species living in the rainforest? But what exactly is the rainforest? What makes it one of the most unique places on Earth? And why is it so crucial to our planet's survival?

True or false: rainforests only exist in South America?False!
Rainforests thrive on every continent... except Antarctica.

There are two classifications of rainforests: Tropical and Temperate. Tropical rainforests are located close to the Earth's equator. They remain warm, and frost free, all year, with temperatures between 70 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit. In fact, Florida has some tropical rainforests, as do Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Temperate rainforests have consistently mild temperatures - but on the cooler side. They are more likely to have evergreen trees, and other needled, pine-type varieties. Whereas the tropical rainforest is known for having trees and plants with bigger, wider leaves. Although temperate rainforests have less species of trees -- theirs tend to live longer -- sometimes 500-1000 years!

The US also has temperate rainforests too, such as North Carolina's Appalachian Mountains, California's Redwood Forest, Alaska's Chugach National Forest, and the Olympic Peninsula in Washington.

What You'll Learn

1. What kinds of animals/species live in the rainforest?
2. What are the different levels/layers in the rainforest?
3. What crucial roles does the rainforest play in the survival of the planet, as well as our everyday lives?

Activities

1. The rainforests around the world contain valuable resources that need to be protected from overuse. Here are [10 ways kids can help save the rainforest](#).
2. You can make a working model of a rainforest with real plants! Check out [these](#) instructions and make sure you put it somewhere you can watch it everyday.

3. Want to know why different birds have different kinds of beaks? [This](#) activity will demonstrate how birds use different kinds of beaks for different reasons, just like your hands!

Additional Resources

Do you want to learn more or be a conservationist (someone who helps save the rainforests?) Check out this article from [National Geographic](#) to learn more about the climates, animals and resources in tropical and temperate rainforests. Which biome would you want to live in? Which would you like to visit?

Kid News

How has your life changed because of COVID-19? Do you have school at home instead of a classroom? Do you need to wear a mask or socially distance at the playground? For the athletes hoping to compete in the Tokyo Olympics, COVID-19 has made training hard. How do you practice swimming if you are not allowed to go to the pool? Athletes around the world have been making home gyms or finding interesting places to practice so that they can represent their countries at the Olympics. [Read](#) about their creative solutions!¹

¹ This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast www.WhoSmarted.com