

Exploring the Tropical Rainforest

Learning objective: To understand the characteristics and layers of a tropical rainforest.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions that follow in full sentences.

Finn the dolphin has travelled far from the ocean to visit a lush tropical rainforest. He is amazed by the towering trees and the thick, green leaves. He learns that rainforests are divided into four layers. The highest is the emergent layer, where the tallest trees poke through the top like giant umbrellas. Below this is the canopy, a thick blanket of leaves that blocks most of the sunlight from reaching the ground.

Underneath the canopy is the understorey, where smaller plants grow in the dim light. Finally, there is the forest floor, which is dark and damp, covered in decomposing leaves. Finn notices that the air feels heavy and warm; this is called humidity. He discovers that rainforests are home to millions of different species of insects, birds, and mammals. This incredible variety of life is called biodiversity. Finn thinks it is wonderful how every animal, from the tiniest ant to the loudest macaw, has a special place to live in this vibrant, rainy world.

Word bank: Canopy · Emergent · Biodiversity · Humidity · Understorey

1. Which layer of the rainforest is described as a 'thick blanket of leaves'? (1 mark)

2. What is the term used to describe the incredible variety of life found in the rainforest? (1 mark)

3. Why do you think plants in the understorey have to be different from plants in the emergent layer? (2 marks)

4. How does Finn know that the rainforest is a humid environment? (2 marks)

5. Do you think the forest floor would be a good place for a plant that needs lots of sunlight to grow? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of the rainforest showing the four layers: Emergent, Canopy, Understorey, and Forest Floor. Add some animals to each layer!



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a scientist visiting the rainforest with Finn. Write a short diary entry describing one new animal you discovered and which layer it lives in.