

Exploring the Rainforest Layers

Learning objective: To identify and illustrate the four distinct layers of a tropical rainforest.

Finn the dolphin has travelled from the ocean to visit the rainforest! Help Finn map out the different layers of the forest. Follow the drawing steps to create your rainforest scene, then use the word bank to label each part correctly.

Draw: A vertical cross-section of a tropical rainforest. The drawing should show a clear progression from the dark, damp forest floor at the bottom, up through the shaded understory, into the dense leafy canopy, and finally to the towering emergent trees reaching into the bright sun.



Label words: Emergent Layer · Canopy · Understorey · Forest Floor · Epiphyte · Liana · Decomposers

Steps:

1. Step 1: Draw some very tall, thin trees that poke out above everything else. Label this the highest layer.
2. Step 2: Draw a thick 'roof' of overlapping green leaves and branches. Label this layer.
3. Step 3: Below the canopy, draw shorter trees and large-leaved plants that like the shade. Label this layer.
4. Step 4: At the bottom, draw the dark ground with fallen leaves, fungi, and insects. Label this layer.
5. Step 5: Draw a woody vine (a liana) climbing up a tree trunk. Label it using the word bank.

6. Step 6: Draw a small plant growing on a branch high up (an epiphyte). Label it using the word bank.
7. Which layer do you think receives the most sunlight? Explain why.