

Exploring the Layers of the Rainforest with Finn

Learning objective: To identify and describe the four distinct layers of a tropical rainforest and understand how flora and fauna are adapted to these environments.

Use your knowledge of geography to illustrate the vertical structure of a tropical rainforest. Ensure you label each layer accurately and include at least one animal adapted to each specific habitat.

Draw: Draw a large, cross-section diagram of a tropical rainforest showing four distinct horizontal layers. Use a clear, labelled scientific style. Include: 1) The 'Emergent Layer' with tall, thin trees reaching above the rest. 2) The 'Canopy' as a thick, leafy ceiling. 3) The 'Understory' with large-leafed plants in the shade. 4) The 'Forest Floor' with damp soil, moss, and decaying leaves. Draw Finn the dolphin imagining the rainforest from his ocean home in a thought bubble at the corner.



Label words: Emergent Layer · Canopy · Understory · Forest Floor · Adaptation · Humidity · Vegetation · Biodiversity

Steps:

1. Label the four layers of the rainforest on your drawing and explain why the 'Canopy' layer is home to the most diverse range of wildlife.
2. Compare and contrast the amount of sunlight received by the 'Emergent Layer' versus the 'Forest Floor'.

How does this affect plant growth?

3. Justify why an animal living in the 'Understory' would need different physical adaptations than an animal living in the 'Emergent Layer'.
4. What might happen to the animals in the rainforest if the 'Canopy' layer were removed? Explain your reasoning.
5. Identify one way that a plant in the 'Forest Floor' layer adapts to survive in low-light conditions.
6. Explain why tropical rainforests are often referred to as the 'lungs of the Earth'.