Exploring South America with Finn the Dolphin

Learning objective: To identify the key geographical features, climate zones, and countries of South America.

Use your knowledge of world geography and an atlas to complete these challenges. Think carefully about the physical and human features of this diverse continent.

Finn the Dolphin has travelled from the coast of Chile across the vast continent of South America. From the high, jagged peaks of the mountains to the dense, humid rainforests, he has mapped out a world of incredible contrasts. South America is home to the largest river system in the world and some of the most unique plant and animal species on Earth.

Word bank: Equator · Amazon · Andes · biome · tributary · hemisphere · plateau · biodiversity

1. Finn is swimming along the Amazon River. Explain why the Amazon Rainforest is often described as the 'lungs of the planet' in relation to the global climate. (2 marks)

2. The Andes mountain range stretches along the western edge of the continent. Compare the climate at the top of these high peaks with the climate in the tropical lowlands. (2 marks)

3. Identify two countries that the Equator passes through in South America. Why is the region near the Equator generally warmer than regions further south? (2 marks)

4. Justify why South America is considered a continent with high 'biodiversity'. Use examples of habitats you have studied. (3 marks)

5. What might happen to the local ecosystem if a major tributary of the Amazon River were to dry up during a period of extreme drought? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a map of South America and label the Amazon River, the Andes Mountains, and the Equator. Include a small sketch of an animal or plant that might live in the Amazon Rainforest.

Extension challenge: Imagine you are a travel writer accompanying Finn. Write a short, descriptive paragraph explaining why a tourist might choose to visit the Atacama Desert instead of the Amazon Rainforest, focusing on the differences in landscape and environment.