

Rainforest Wonders with Finn the Explorer

Learning objective: To understand the structure and importance of tropical rainforests, and the impact of human activity on these ecosystems.

Read the passage below carefully. Then, answer the questions that follow, using evidence from the text to support your answers.

Finn the dolphin has travelled far beyond the oceans to visit the Earth's tropical rainforests. These remarkable ecosystems, found near the Equator, act as the lungs of our planet. The rainforest is organised into four distinct layers: the forest floor, the understory, the canopy, and the emergent layer. Each level offers a unique habitat for an incredible variety of wildlife. The thick canopy, a dense ceiling of leaves and branches, captures the majority of the sunlight and rain. Beneath this, the understory remains dark and humid, housing plants that thrive in the shadows. Unfortunately, these vital regions are shrinking due to deforestation. When trees are cleared for timber or farmland, the delicate balance of the environment is disrupted, threatening the biodiversity that relies on these trees for survival. Finn notes that protecting these green giants is essential for maintaining the global climate and providing homes for millions of species. By understanding how the rainforest functions, we can better appreciate why conservation is a responsibility we all share. It is not just a collection of trees; it is a complex, living masterpiece that requires our protection and respect.

Word bank: canopy · ecosystem · deforestation · biodiversity · emergent · understory · humidity

1. Name the four distinct layers of the rainforest as described in the text. (2 marks) (2 marks)

2. According to the passage, what happens to the environment when trees are cleared for farmland? (2 marks) (2 marks)

3. Why does the author describe the rainforest as the 'lungs of our planet'? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text. (3 marks) (3 marks)

4. Explain why plants in the understory layer might have adapted differently than those in the emergent layer. (3 marks) (3 marks)

5. Do you agree that protecting the rainforest is a global responsibility? Justify your answer by linking the rainforest's health to the rest of the world. (4 marks) (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section of a rainforest, clearly labelling the four layers: the forest floor, understory, canopy, and emergent layer, adding at least one animal or plant to each section.



Extension challenge: Research a specific animal that lives in the canopy. Write a short paragraph explaining its physical adaptations and why it is perfectly suited to its environment. Then, imagine what might happen to this animal if the canopy layer were significantly reduced. How would its daily life change?