

## Activity three: Rainforest animals and plants

### Curriculum links: a

Science, Geography, English, RE, Art and Design, IT, PSHE

### Background and preparation:

Rainforests grow in areas where rainfall and temperatures are high and constant. The Amazon rainforest is the biggest in the world. It is home to many unique animals, birds, insects, and reptiles.

Amazon rainforest facts:

- It has been in existence for at least 55 million years.
- One in ten known species in the world live in the rainforest.
- The Amazon rainforest is the world's largest, covering an area about two-thirds the size of the United States.
- There are so many species of plants and animals in the rainforest that, if you stand in one place and turn a complete circle, you might see hundreds of different species.
- Rainforests recycle their own rain! As water evaporates in the forest it forms clouds above the canopy that later fall as rain.
- Rainforests help control the world's climate. However, when the rainforests are burned and cleared, carbon is released that causes the weather to be much hotter. (This is called the greenhouse effect.)
- Some of the medicines we now use come from tropical rainforest plants, such as aspirin.

These are some of the **creatures** that live in the Amazon rainforest:

- Black caiman
- Jaguar
- Anaconda
- Electric eels
- Piranha
- Poison dart frogs
- Vampire bats
- Toucan
- Parrot
- Otter
- Heron
- Anteater
- Harpy eagle
- Spider monkey
- Hummingbird

The rainforest has five layers of **trees and plants**:

1. The **Emergent Layer**: The tallest trees, rising 20-30 metres above the rest of the greenery.
2. The **Canopy**: 30-40 metres above the ground, this thick green 'roof' of branches and leaves is home to most of the forests plants and animals.
3. The **Understorey**: Sparser than the canopy, these are the tops of smaller trees.
4. The **Forest Floor**: The dark humid floor is covered by several inches of fallen leaves.

Underneath it all is the forest floor, covered by several inches of fallen leaves.

### Activity 3a:

Fill in the accompanying worksheet.

### Extension:

Use the Internet to find out which Amazon rainforest animals are dangerous to humans.