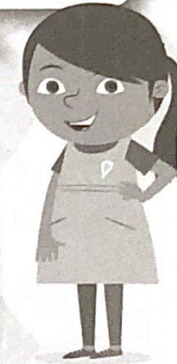


# What are Rainforests?

Like all forests, rainforests are full of trees and plants. But rainforests are different in one special way. They are very wet.

There are two types of rainforest: a tropical rainforest and a temperate rainforest. The main difference between them is where the water comes from that makes them so damp. Tropical rainforests get a lot of rainfall. Temperate rainforests are wet from the fog and moisture in the air. This moisture comes from nearby oceans.

Moisture is when something has water in it making it feel damp.



## Tropical rainforests

Tropical rainforests are found near the equator. Here the temperature is warm all year around – it does not even change much between day and night. The largest tropical rainforest is in Brazil.

The *equator* is the imaginary line that runs around the middle of the Earth, where the temperature is around 31 degrees.



A tropical rainforest has four layers:

- The forest floor is right at the bottom. Here it is dark and full of rotting leaves and branches.
- The understory is the most open part of the rainforest where more light can get in around the tree trunks.
- The canopy is the top of most of the trees, which grow together to make a sort of roof over the forest.
- The highest layer is above the canopy. Only the very tallest trees reach this layer.

### Forest Fact!

The Amazon rainforest in Brazil is the largest tropical rainforest in the world. It has about 390 billion trees in it!

Because of the temperature, trees and plants stay colourful and healthy. On average, tropical rainforests get over 250 centimetres of rain a year but they can get over 1,000 centimetres! That is a lot of rain. It can take a single raindrop ten minutes to fall from the tropical rainforest canopy to the forest floor.



### **Temperate rainforests**

Temperate rainforests are found along the coast. Here the weather changes more than in tropical rainforests and the temperature depends on the season. This means that they are not as warm as tropical rainforests but they do not get very cold either. There are temperate rainforests in North America, Norway, Japan, New Zealand, Southern Australia and the UK.

### **Rainforests at risk**

Deforestation is putting rainforests in danger. Trees are cut down so that the wood can be sold and so the land can be used for farming. Thirty acres of trees in tropical rainforest are lost every minute – that is the same as about 15 football pitches! To keep all the animals and plants that live in the rainforest safe we need to protect the forests from being destroyed.

#### **Forest Fact!**

Lots of different animals live in tropical rainforests. Jaguars, leopards, tigers, elephants, gorillas, snakes, monkeys, bats and frogs live in rainforests as well as lots of different types of insect and bird.