



Amazon Biome: Why is the Amazon Rainforest important to us?

Very Important Vocabulary:

RainForests: RainForests are thick forests that grow in places with a lot of rain. Tropical rainforests are hot all year and found near the equator. Temperate rainforests are cooler and grow in places like parts of North America and New Zealand.

Temperate: Temperate means a place that has mild weather, with warm summers and cool winters. Temperate areas have seasons and get some rain throughout the year. Some rainforests in temperate zones are cooler than tropical ones.

Tropical: Tropical areas are hot and often wet. They are found near the equator and don't have big changes between seasons. Tropical rainforests grow in these areas because of the warm temperature and heavy rainfall all year round.

Ecosystem: An ecosystem is a group of living things (like plants, animals, and people) and non-living things (like water, soil, and air) that all live together in one place. Everything in an ecosystem is connected and depends on each other to survive.

Interdependence: Interdependence means that living things rely on each other. In a rainforest, animals depend on plants for food and shelter, and plants may depend on animals to spread seeds or help them grow. If one part is damaged, it can affect the whole ecosystem.

Deforestation: Deforestation means cutting down or clearing large areas of forest.

Where Are Rainforests Found?

Rainforests grow in places with lots of rain and warm temperatures. Tropical rainforests are near the equator in areas like the Amazon Basin in South America, the Congo Basin in Africa, and Southeast Asia. These areas are hot and wet all year round. Temperate rainforests, which are cooler and have different seasons, can be found in places like the Pacific Northwest of the USA, southern Chile, and New Zealand.

Tropical vs Temperate Rainforests

Tropical rainforests are hot and humid all year and are full of many different plants and animals. They have thick canopies with several layers of trees and plants. Temperate rainforests are cooler and don't have as many species. Their trees often grow in simpler layers and the weather changes more during the year.

Temperate Climates vs Tropical Climates

In temperate climates, which are cooler and have seasons, people grow crops like apples, wheat, and grapes. These are often farmed on large plots of land. In the Amazon, many products like Brazil nuts are wild-harvested from the forest, not farmed, and need healthy ecosystems to grow properly.

Brazil Nuts and the Forest

Brazil nuts grow on trees that can be 50 metres tall. These trees need special bees to pollinate them so they can grow nuts. The nuts come in hard pods that fall to the ground and are collected by local people. This takes time and effort and is done in a sustainable way, which means the forest is not damaged.

What is the Amazon like?

The Amazon has thick forest, flat lowlands, and areas that flood during rainy seasons. Its hot, humid weather (around 25–28°C all year) creates perfect conditions for thousands of different plants and animals. It is one of the most biodiverse places on Earth.

What Grows in the Amazon?

The rainforest provides many useful products. People collect things like Brazil nuts, açai berries, rubber, cacao, and medicinal plants. These grow well in the warm, wet climate. For example, rubber trees produce latex, which is used in products like tyres and gloves.

The Amazon Rainforest

The Amazon Rainforest is the biggest tropical rainforest in the world. It spreads across nine countries, mainly in Brazil, and covers about 5.5 million square kilometres. The Amazon River, one of the world's longest rivers, flows through it. The river system includes many smaller rivers (tributaries), floodplains, and wetlands, helping the forest stay green and full of life.

Why does the Amazon Matter?

The Amazon helps to regulate Earth's climate. It takes in lots of carbon dioxide and gives out oxygen. It also affects weather and supports many freshwater systems. About 10% of the world's known species live there. The forest is also important for Indigenous peoples, who rely on it for food, medicine, and shelter.

Why is Deforestation a Problem?

Cutting down too many trees causes big problems. It destroys habitats, adds carbon dioxide to the atmosphere (which worsens climate change), and harms Indigenous communities. It also changes weather patterns and reduces the forest's ability to hold and clean water. Over time, this damages the Earth's environment and makes life harder for many people and animals.