

Rainforest Deforestation

Rainforests are a very important part of our planet, giving us oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide and giving a home to 50% of the animal and plant species of the planet. Not to mention the medicines and cures that are made from the plants that grow there.

Deforestation

Deforestation is the name given to the destruction of the rainforests and this is being done by burning them down, chopping down the trees or flooding the areas. This is happening so fast that an area the size of one football pitch is being destroyed every minute! If this carries on at this speed, it will take less than a hundred years to destroy all the rainforests on Earth.



Fact File in Numbers

- 20% of the world's oxygen is produced in the Amazon forest.
- 28,000 species of animals are expected to become extinct in the next 25 years due to deforestation.
- 50% of the tropical rainforests that we had have already gone.

Why are they being destroyed?

The biggest reason for clearing the rainforests is to make space for producing food, including cattle to be farmed for cheap beef and also growing large crops, such as soya beans and palm oil. In addition, other causes of deforestation, which are also related to making money include: chopping down and using the wood from the forest; building roads for mining metals, gold or diamonds; flooding areas to make dams to generate electricity and also digging for oil.

How can they be saved?

You could help by raising money for a deforestation charity. Also, you could think about the reasons that the forests are being destroyed and how you could help. For example, the cheap beef farmed in the areas that used to be rainforest land is often used in fast food chains. Could you avoid eating fast food from these outlets? You could also check on your supermarket food labels - was it farmed in an area where deforestation is taking place? You could also use rainforest friendly wood so you know it is not a product of deforestation. Finally remember, paper comes from trees so any paper saving you can do, as well as recycling, will help the environment.

Questions about Rainforest Deforestation

1. Name a reason not to destroy rainforests given in the first paragraph.

2. Name one of the three ways given that a rainforest can be destroyed.

3. What does 'deforestation' mean?

4. In the fact file, what does the word 'extinct' mean?

5. Why does saving paper help the rainforests?

6. Why has the author used an exclamation mark in paragraph two?

7. What fraction of the earth's plant and animal species live in the rainforests?

8. What is the main reason that rainforests are being destroyed?

9. Which rainforest produces 20% of the world's oxygen?

10. What is your opinion about deforestation? What could you do to try and help stop it?
