

Rainforest Deforestation

Rainforests are an essential part of our planet, providing oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide and housing 50% of the animal and plant species of the planet. Not to mention, the medicines and cures that are made using plants only found in a rainforest environment.

Deforestation

Deforestation is the term used for the destruction of the rainforests. This is being done by burning them, chopping down the trees, or in some cases, flooding the areas. This is happening at such a rate that an area the size of one football pitch is being destroyed every sixty seconds! If the current rate of deforestation continues, it will take less than a century 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.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ of the tropical rainforests that we had have already gone.
- Global production of palm oil has doubled over the last decade.



Why are they being destroyed?

The biggest reason for deforestation is to clear space for food manufacturing, including cattle to be farmed for cheap beef and also growing large crops, such as soya beans and palm oil. Palm oil is now a valuable commodity worldwide and is in many products such as shampoo, detergent, chocolate and cosmetics. 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?

There are plenty of charities fighting against deforestation and people can always help by raising money for those charities. Also, think about the reasons that the forests are being destroyed and how some little changes in your everyday habits 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 for the country of origin of any meat you buy. 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 by-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 introductory paragraph.

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

3. In the final paragraph, what type of adjective is 'rainforest-friendly'?

4. In the fact file, what does the author say will happen in the next quarter of a century?

5. Why does saving paper help the rainforests?

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

7. In the third paragraph the author refers to palm oil as a 'valuable commodity', what is a 'valuable commodity'?

8. What is the main reason that deforestation is happening?

9. In the 'How can they be saved?' paragraph, why do you think that the author has asked questions?

10. What is your opinion about deforestation? Will you try and make changes in your daily life?
