

Pedro the Potoo's Guide to the Rainforest



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It's me: Pedro the potoo!

I am Pedro the potoo from the story 'Rainforest Calling'. I'm here to give you a quick guide to the rainforest. That's where I live!

Don't worry if you haven't read the story. This guide gives you lots of information about the rainforest – the different layers and habitats, the animals that live there and the types of plants that you might see.

If you do want to find out more about me and my friends in the 'Rainforest Calling' story, you can check it out – but be warned, there is a strange creature that follows me around and some tree-stealers doing a lot of chop-chopping.



What Is the Rainforest?

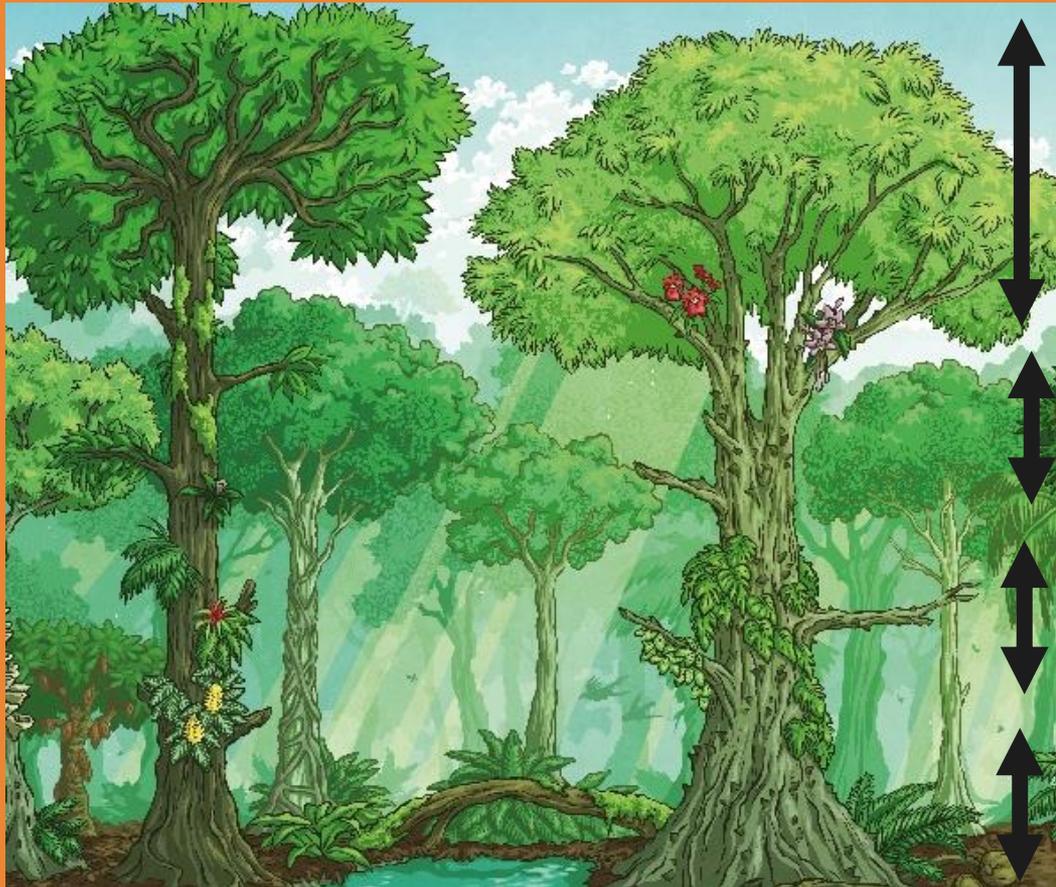
Rainforest regions are areas of forest which are warm, wet and humid. They are hot because they are near the equator but they also have lots of rainfall.

More than half of all the world's animal and plant species live in the rainforest. The trees in these regions are responsible for producing a huge amount of the world's oxygen supply.



The Four Layers of the Rainforest

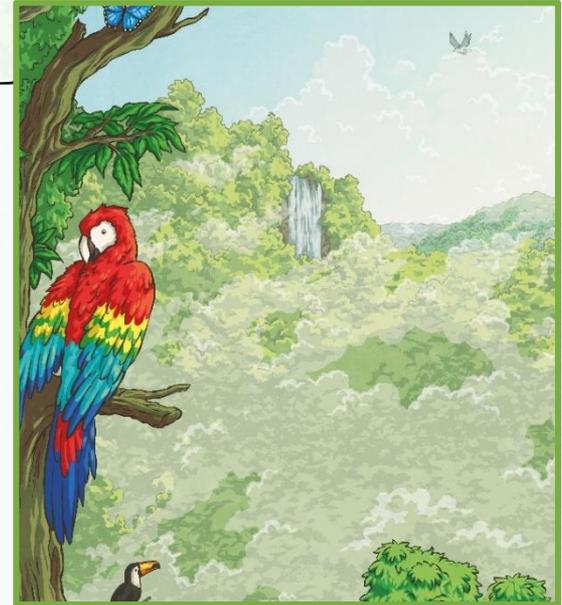
The rainforest can be naturally divided into four main layers, from the highest to lowest points.



At the bottom is the **forest floor**. There is lots of shade, pools of water, very little sunlight and a carpet of dead leaves covering the ground.

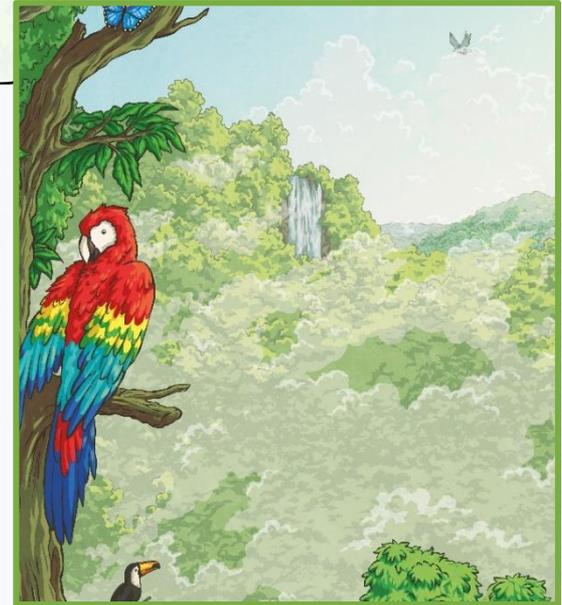
Emergent Layer

- There is bright sunlight and very little shade as the emergent layer towers above everything else.
- Trees often have mushroom-shaped tops, pushing up and out over the layer below. They can reach up to 60m high.
- As well as being hot, it is also very windy up this high.
- Some birds look for nesting places up here away from **predators**.



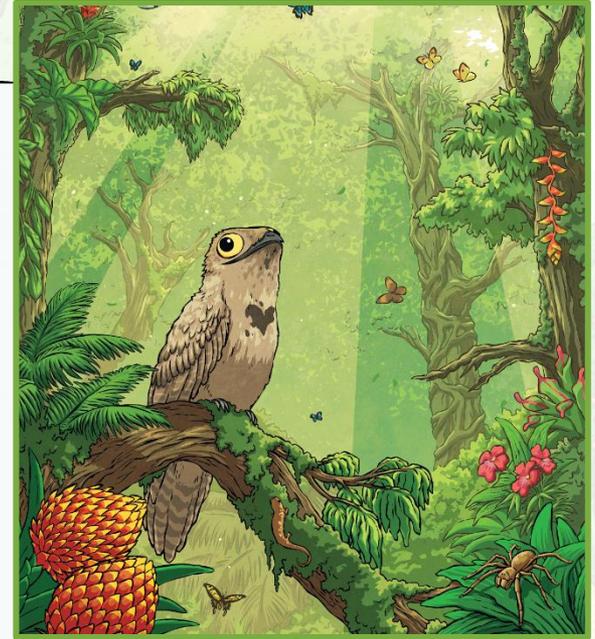
Emergent Layer

- Animals found here include some monkeys, birds such as the harpy eagle and the scarlet macaw, butterflies and bats.
- There is space to fly or swing between treetops.
- Creatures living here must be able to cope with the heat and the wind and find food high up.
- One of the tallest trees in the rainforest is the Brazil nut tree.



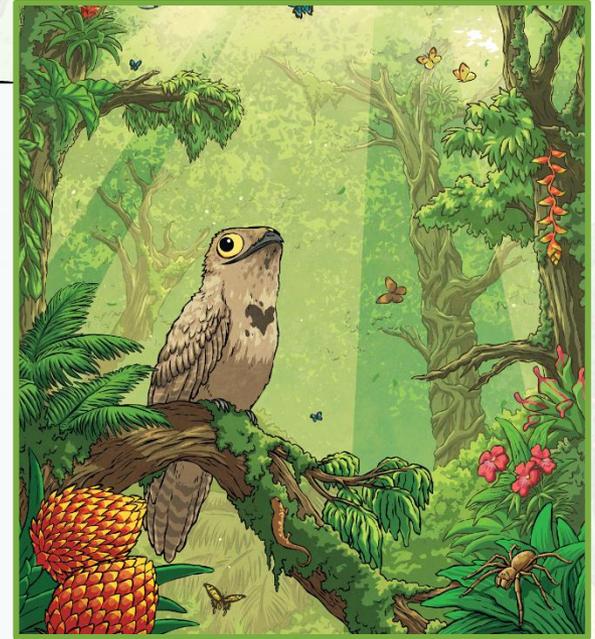
Canopy Layer

- The canopy is often considered the main layer or is referred to as the '**habitat zone**'. It is where the most creatures live and where the leaves and vegetation are most densely found. This means that there is also plenty of food.
- Sunlight is a little more limited but there's still plenty of it and also lots of rain. It's not as dark as the layers below.
- Vines and branches often intertwine while leaves from each tree grow out, up against and overlapping with their neighbours. This is what forms a continuous '**canopy**' over everything below.



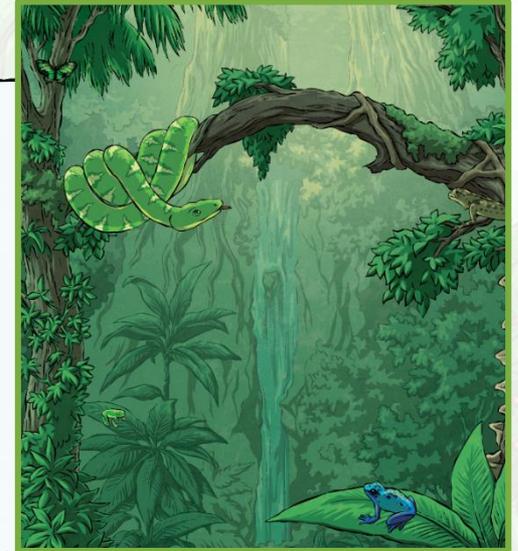
Canopy Layer

- Animals living here include tree frogs, butterflies, sloths, monkeys, iguanas and toucans and potoos!
- It is the most crowded area with many different types of animal species and is very noisy!
- Plants up here include **epiphytes**, which grow on other plants such as tree branches, rather than having roots in the ground. They get their moisture from the air.



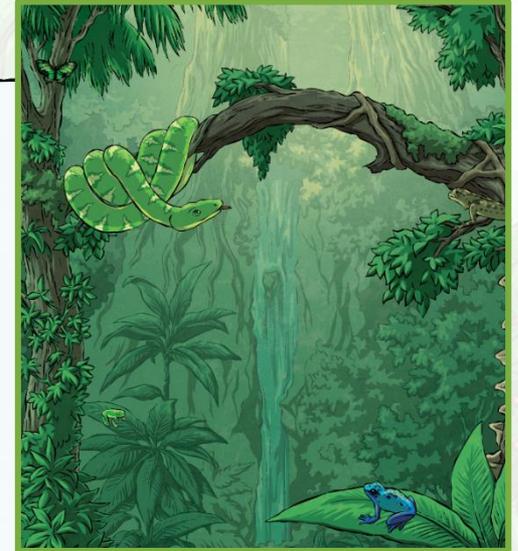
Understorey Layer

- The understorey receives significantly less sunlight than the two layers above, making it much more dark and damp.
- It is relatively open compared with the thick, dense layer above.
- It includes young trees up to around 4m tall and other plants which do not rely on lots of sunlight.
- These are the perfect conditions for lots of insects and reptiles to breed and survive.
- Rattan palm is found among the plant species here, which is harvested to make furniture.



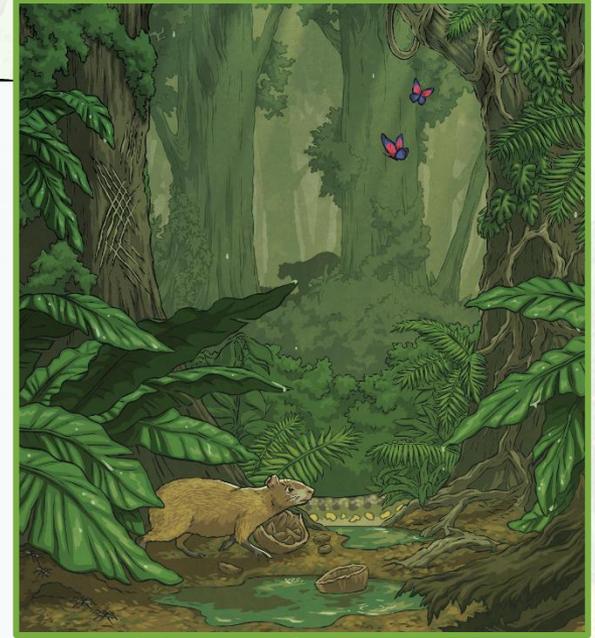
Understorey Layer

- Animals found in the understorey range from frogs and snakes to fruit bats and some monkeys.
- The understorey is what links the canopy above and the forest floor below, so it's possible to find some creatures whose habitat overlaps the understorey from these layers.
- Plants here tend to have quite large leaves to capture what little sunlight gets through, and some have channels down the middle to allow rainwater to run down to the tree roots on the ground.



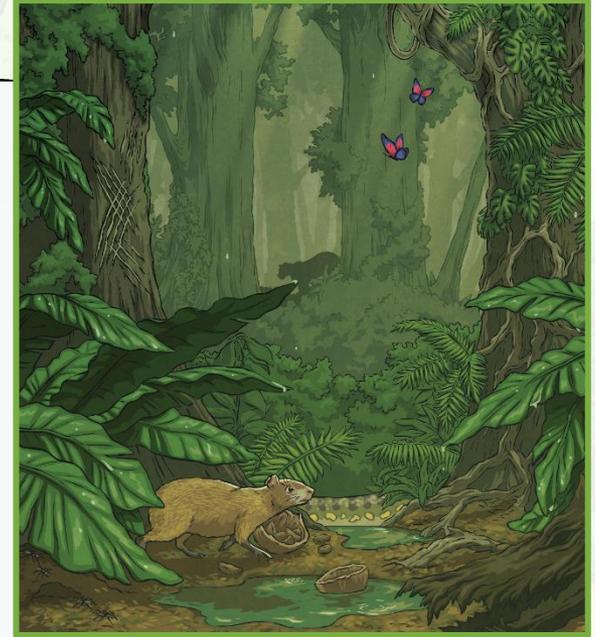
Forest Floor

- Very little sunlight is able to reach the forest floor which means very little is able to grow there.
- As it is dark and damp, leaves that fall to the ground decay quite quickly.
- The ground is covered with the fallen leaves, fruits, seeds and small branches, which all decompose.
- Fungi can be found feeding on the decaying matter.



Forest Floor

- The type of creatures found on the forest floor include the agouti, which feeds on fallen Brazil nuts, as well as armadillos, scorpions, frogs, iguanas and anteaters. The largest predator, the jaguar, prowls around the forest floor.
- There are also lots of insects, such as beetles, ants and termites.
- In the lakes and wet areas, you will also find creatures such as the caiman and the anaconda, both fierce predators.



What Can You Remember?

From top to bottom, the rainforest contains all kinds of animals from large to small: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects.

All the animal and plant species rely on each other for survival. There are many types of **predators** and **prey**.

Can you remember the names of all the layers?

How many different animal types or species can you remember?

Which layer gets the most **sunlight**?

Which layer includes the **largest predator**?



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