

Tracking the Tropics

In our Tropical Rainforest Biome you will discover how **plants**, **animals** and **people** of the Tropical Rainforest fit together.

Let's Start!

LOOK point 1 (Map on Left as you enter the Biome)

Tropical rainforests grow in areas of high rainfall, they are found between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

On your World map carefully shade the areas where tropical rainforests are found.

 Which country has the largest rainforest in the World? _____



 Describe the climatic conditions in this Biome:

Look Point 2 (Look closely all around you)



Plants have special adaptations that enable them to survive in the area where they live. Find plants with the following adaptations and complete the table below.

Plant Adaptation	Plant Name	Suggested reason for this feature	Approximate size of plant
Huge Leaves			
Spiky bark			
Drip Tip (pointy drip tips encourage rainwater to run off the leaves)			
Buttress roots (Roots growing from the bottom of tropical trees to provide support in wet spongy soil)			
Epiphytes (Plants that grow on other plants high up in the canopy to reach the sunlight)			

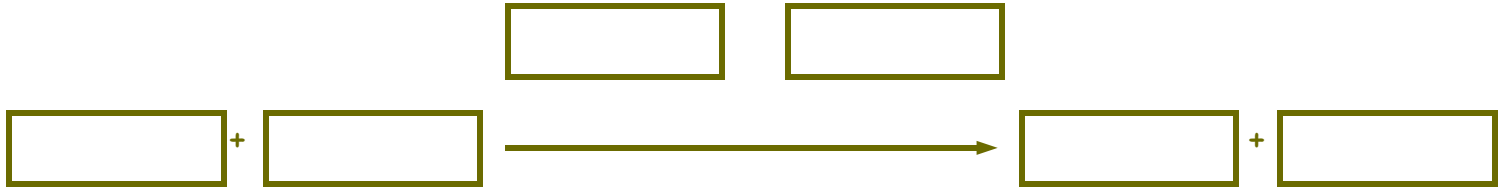
The tall tropical trees receive lots of sunlight while the plants on the forest floor live in dark conditions.

What vital but silent process goes on in the leaves during the day?



 Have a look at the formula below, can you complete it by putting the correct words in the boxes?

Chlorophyll Water Carbon Dioxide Oxygen Glucose Sunlight



LOOK POINT 3 (look closely all around you)

Animals in the rainforest are always competing with each other for food, space and not to get eaten! To survive they have adapted to the hot, wet, humid and sometimes dangerous environment.




 What adaptations would be needed by animals that live on the forest floor?

Conditions:	Adaptations:

Some plants and animals in the rainforest help each other out. This is called **symbiosis**.

Leaf cutter ants climb trees and cut small pieces of leaves. They carry the leaves away but don't eat them. Instead they bury them underground to form a fungus. This fungus is the only food that the ants need to eat.


Can you find another example of plants and animals helping each other?

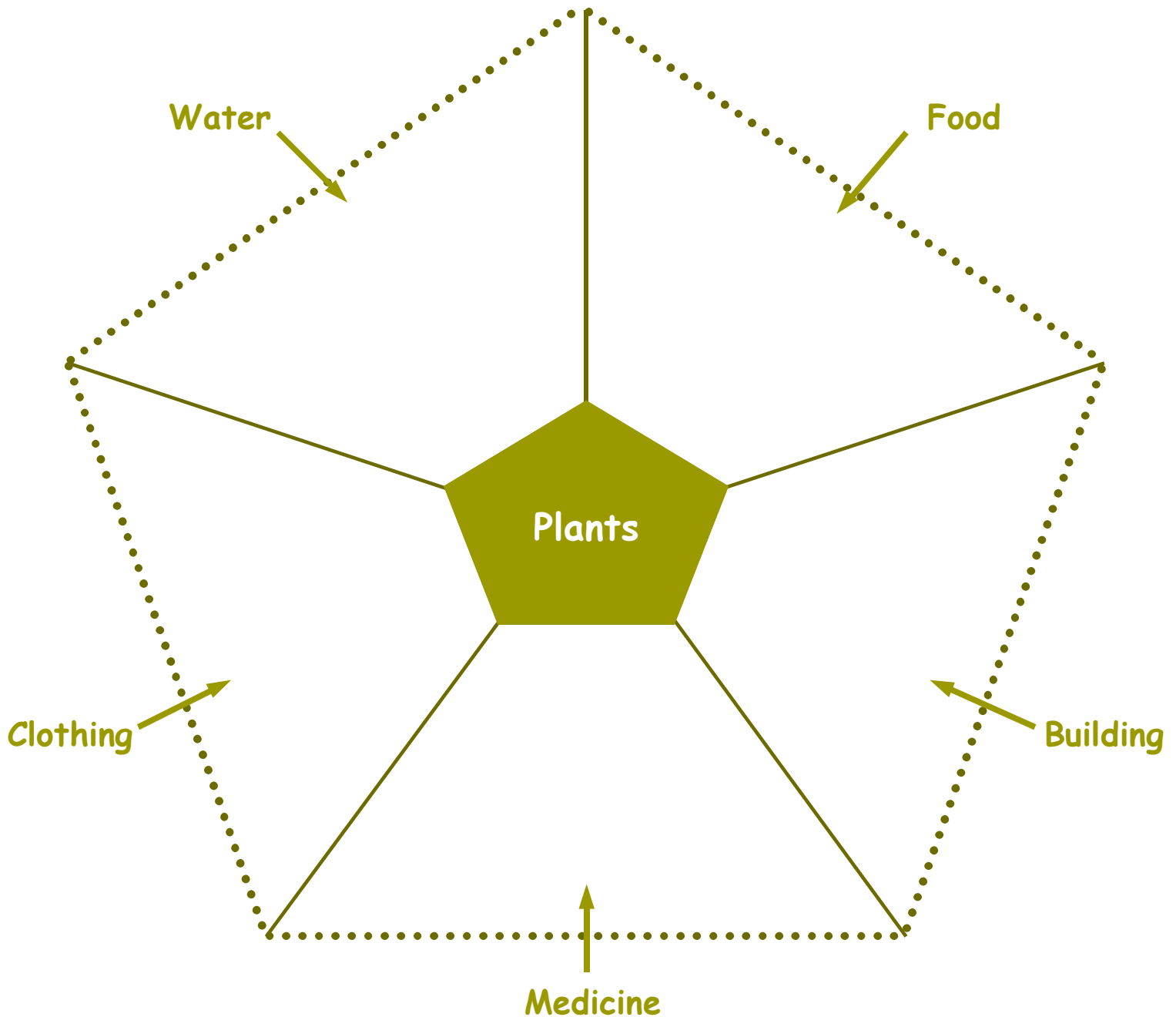


LOOK POINT 4 (Malaysian House)

Rainforests are home to many people. To survive, they use the plants around them and buy some things from local village markets.

Imagine you live in the rainforest, how would you live?

 Look carefully at the Malaysian house and surrounding garden. Complete the chart below to show what plants you would use to ensure you get what you need.

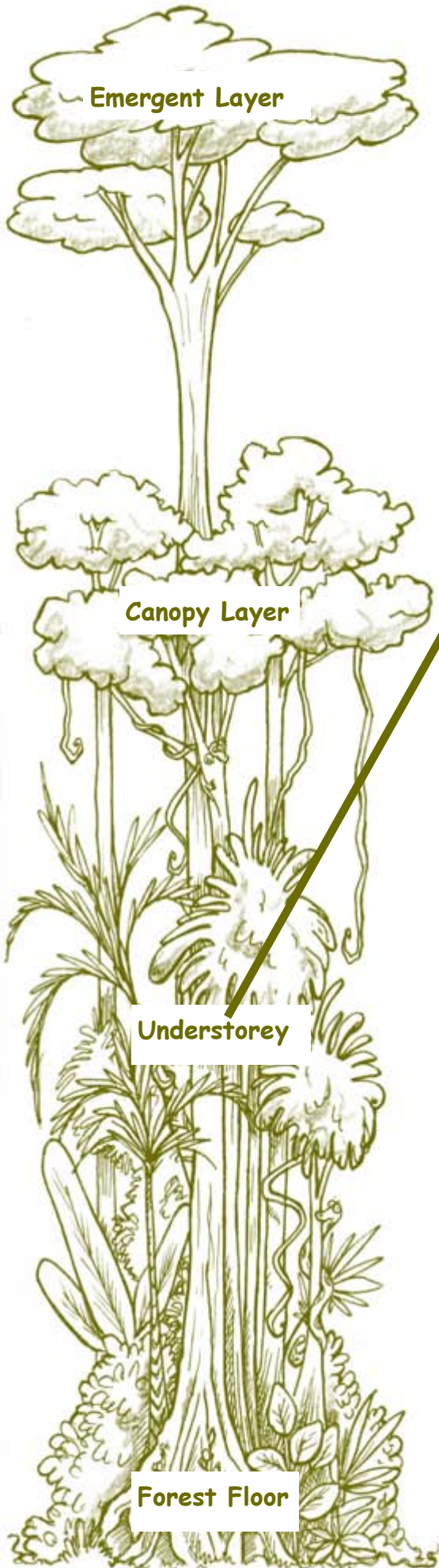


Look Point 5 (waterfall)

The vegetation in a rainforest is organised in layers with different animals and insects living in each layer.



For each layer link the plants and animals found there.



Plants

Animals

Little sunshine reaches this layer so the plants have to grow large leaves to reach the sunlight. Young trees, small shrubs and woody plants.

Many animals live in this layer as food is abundant. Hummingbird, Three-toed sloth, Coral Snake, Blue bird of Paradise.

Trees as tall as sky scrapers towering 70m above the forest floor. Sunlight is plentiful up here.

Poison Arrow Frog, Anaconda, Fungi, Jaguar.

It is very dark down here; Almost no plants grow in this area. Fallen leaves, seeds, fruits and branches begin to decay quickly. Moss, dead leaves, vines.

Leopard, Red-eyed tree frogs, large concentration of insects.

Tall trees with a thick maze of leaves and branches.

Birdwing butterfly, Toucan, Harpy Eagle, Howler Monkey.

LOOK POINT 6 (under the Tropical Archway)

Who needs a rainforest? Apart from the plants, animals and people who live in them, we all need the rainforest. It provides us with many everyday items. Walk under the Tropical Archway where food and useful plants are growing.

 Explore this area to find six plants we use every day.

Plant _____ Product _____

Plant _____ Product _____

Plant _____ Product _____

Plant _____ Product _____

Plant _____ Product _____

Plant _____ Product _____

A Last Thought

Now that you have discovered the rainforest, think for yourself about the reasons why rainforests are important to us - even if we don't live near one.

Read the statements below and decide which you think are the most important. There is no right or wrong order but you can discuss with a friend.

The more important the statement, the higher its position on the scale

 1 = More important 6 = Less important

- Rainforests have some of the richest diversity of plants and animals on earth.
- Trees growing in the rainforests take up carbon dioxide and make it into wood.
- Rainforests are home to many people who have learned how to live in harmony with the forests.
- Rainforests provide more drug-yielding plants for medicine than any other ecosystem.
- Rainforests provide many resources including medicines, food and materials.
- Rainforests make rain and regulate the climate globally.