
Tropical Rainforest
Animal Adaptations
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Quality Standard
Approved

Learning Objective

- To understand the ways in which animals have adapted to live in the Amazon rainforest.

Success Criteria

- To identify adaptations of different animals.
- To explain how different adaptations help the animals survive in their environment.
- To use your knowledge of the environmental conditions in the rainforest, and examples of animal adaptations to design a brand new animal.

Key Words

environment	the surroundings and conditions an animal lives in.
survival	the fight to stay alive.
adaptation	the way an animal has changed to become better able to survive in its environment.
camouflage	to hide or disguise yourself.
prey	an animal that is hunted and killed for food.
canopy	the tallest layer of trees in the rainforest.
toxin	the poison produced by an animal or plant.

Animal Adaptations

Task 1

You will see eight examples of animals that have adapted to life in the Amazon rainforest. You should make notes on the adaptations on your **Information Gathering Activity Sheet.**

Task 2

When you have seen all eight examples, you should use your research to design your own, unique and original animal that would be perfectly adapted to life in the Amazon rainforest.

You should:

1. Draw a picture of your animal and label the key features that help it to survive in the Amazon.
2. Add explanations to your labels, showing how these features help them survive.
3. Give your animal a name.

Poison Dart Frog







They have wide, flat, sticky feet that help the frog to climb trees to reach their food. They don't have webbed toes like other frogs.

They have glands that release toxins onto their skin that can kill anything that eats them. The only animal that is immune to their toxin is the snake.

They eat small flies, bugs, ants and caterpillars; all of which are abundant in the rainforest.

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Bengal Tiger



The Bengal tiger is one of the biggest animals in the rainforest. It is carnivorous and a strong hunter.

Their fur is orange with black stripes that help them hide in the rainforest. They use their sense of smell to locate and track their prey in the rainforest. This helps them find their scent.

Their strong, sharp teeth allow them to kill and eat their food. They have a huge appetite and can eat a large amount in one meal and then survive for days without eating again.

They have excellent night vision so can hunt in the day and night. This increases their food choices and hunting success rate.

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Three-Toed Sloth



They move extremely slowly. This conserves energy (meaning they need less food) and helps them avoid being seen by predators.

The three-toed sloth lives in the canopy of the rainforest. They rarely go down to the forest floor so they avoid contact with a lot of the predators.

They sleep for up to 20 hours per day. They are still for so long that algae grows on their fur. This helps them with camouflage.

They are vegetarians, living on leaves and fruits which are abundant in the rainforest.

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Piranhas



They work in teams, called 'schools', to kill large animals such as caiman and young cattle.

Piranhas have razor-sharp, triangle-shaped teeth on their upper and lower jaws. These clamp together perfectly and make it almost impossible for their prey to escape.

They have a strong sense of smell and can locate their prey accurately in the water. This helps them survive in the murky waters of the Amazon.

Piranhas have thick scales on their heads to protect them from injury whilst attacking prey.

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Spider Monkeys



The tails of spider monkeys are long and straight. They can use them as an extra limb, allowing them to hang and swing in trees easily.

They are omnivores, eating both plant matter and meat. They forage for food in the trees and on the ground. They live in groups of up to 30 individuals. They feed mainly on food that can be found in trees such as fruit, nuts and bird eggs.

They usually have one baby at a time with gaps of up to five years between babies. This allows the mother to focus on each baby as it grows. The males help protecting and educating them to find food. They live high up in the canopy out of reach of many predators. This is also where the most nutritious leaves can be found.

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Jaguar



Jaguars have extremely strong jaws, allowing them to bite and kill their prey more efficiently than any big cat.

They have a long, strong tail that helps them balance and change direction quickly when running.

They have padded paws that allow them to walk quietly through the rainforest. They also have excellent eyesight, making them good hunters. They are mainly nocturnal which also helps them have the advantage whilst hunting.

They can climb trees to catch food and sleep away from predators.

They are good swimmers which allows them to hunt and catch prey that lives in the water or on the other side of the river. This also helps them cool down in the heat.

Their colourful patterned fur acts as camouflage.

They have a varied diet ranging from snails to monkeys, meaning they rarely struggle to find food.

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Toucan



They have four toes on each foot. Two facing backwards, two forwards. These help them balance in the trees.

Toucans have very large, colourful bills. This is mainly used for eating and attracting a mate. It can also be used as a weapon if necessary as it is sharp.

They mainly eat fruit and use their bill to pick and break it open. Fruit is widely available in the rainforest so they rarely struggle to find food.

They are agile, well camouflaged and have exceptional eyesight. All of these features help them avoid predators easily.

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Army Ants



Army ants live in colonies of 100 thousand to two million ants. They have strength in numbers that allows them to swarm on and kill their prey.

They eat larger insects, such as cockroaches and tarantulas, which are widely available in the lower layers of the rainforest.

They have large stingers and mandibles that allow them to subdue, kill and eat their prey.

They can link their bodies together to form a secure shell around their queen and young.

They are nomadic so they only build temporary homes before relocating to better feeding grounds.

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Design Your Own Animal

Your task is to design a unique animal, perfectly adapted to life in the Amazon rainforest.

Check your list of conditions and make sure it has ways of coping with environmental problems such as heat, predators and competition for food.

You should:

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2. Add explanations to your labels, showing how these features help them survive.
3. Give your animal a name.



Plenary Quiz

1	Who has sticky feet to help them climb trees?
2	Who uses their tail as a fifth limb to help them climb trees?
3	Who has dark, stripy fur for camouflage?
4	Who uses their bill to break open fruit?
5	Who lives in a colony of up to 2 million?

Plenary Quiz

6	Who swims to help them cool down?
7	Who sleeps for up to 20 hours per day?
8	Who has triangular teeth to help them clamp on to and grip their prey?
9	How does the algae on their fur help the three toed sloth survive in the rainforest?
10	How do the pads on the feet of the Bengal tiger and jaguar help them survive in the rainforest.

Plenary Quiz

1	Who has sticky feet to help them climb trees?

Poison dart frog

2	Who uses their tail as a fifth limb to help them climb trees?

Spider monkey

3	Who has dark, stripy fur for camouflage?

Bengal tiger

4	Who uses their bill to break open fruit?

Toucan

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Army ants

Plenary Quiz

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Jaguar

7	Who sleeps for up to 20 hours per day?

Three-toed sloth

8	Who has triangular teeth to help them clamp on to and grip their prey?

Piranhas

9	How does the algae on their fur help the three toed sloth survive in the rainforest?

It is good camouflage

10	How do the pads on the feet of the Bengal tiger and jaguar help them survive in the rainforest.

They help them creep quietly around the forest whilst hunting


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