

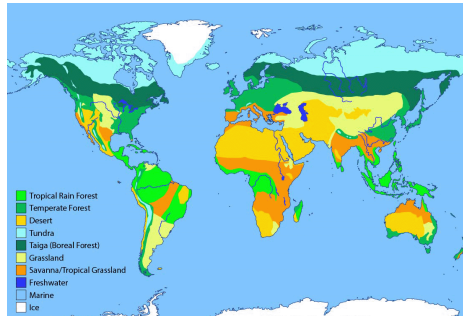
South America: Why are jungles so wet and deserts so dry?

Understand how different biomes give rise to distinctive communities of plants and animals.



A map of South America

Distribution of the world's biomes



Rainforests revealed

From the sunny tree tops to the dense forest floor, check out the many layers of the rainforest...



- Emergent layer** These large, umbrella-like branches are at tree-top height — up to 60m tall. They're home to animals like small monkeys, butterflies and even eagles.
- Canopy layer** These trees are packed much closer together, creating a 'ceiling' over the forest which shades the ground and collects rainfall. 70% of rainforest life is found here.
- Understorey layer** This humid layer is halfway down the height of the tallest tree and is where most of the carbon is stored. Frogs, birds, insects and even leopards live here.
- Shrub layer** Around 8m off the forest floor, many of the plants here have medicinal properties. Full of fruit and flowers, it's perfect for butterflies.
- Forest floor** Very little sunlight reaches this part of the rainforest so it's great for fungi, moss and herbs. Bugs and amphibians love the humidity, but they must watch out for predators!

Wonder

Enjoyment

Love of language

Belonging

Empathy

Courage

Kindness

Previous Learning

- Physical and human geographical features of Meden Vale, Sheffield, France and Florida
- Different land uses and what economic activity involves
- Rivers and the water cycle
- Mountains

Geographical Concepts

biome	A large area with a particular climate and specific plants and animals.
climate	The average weather conditions of a place over a long period of time.
distribution	The pattern of where physical and human features are located.
environment	The particular physical and human characteristics which make a place distinctive.
interdependence	How people and their environments are connected and rely upon each other.
location	The position of something.
processes	The natural events and human actions that bring about change.
weather	The conditions outside at a particular place and time.

Key Vocabulary

deforestation	When forests are cut down and the area is permanently cleared for another use.
desert	An area that is very dry because it receives very little precipitation.
ecosystem	A community of living things, together with their environment.
endangered	A species which has been categorised as very likely to become extinct.
fauna	All of the animal life of a place.
flora	All of the plant life of a place.
humid	Having a high amount of water vapour; damp; moist.
precipitation	Water released from the clouds; rain, snow, sleet or hail.
rainforest	Dense evergreen woodland found in tropical regions around the Equator.

Key Information

- There are 12 countries in South America and over 400 million people live there.
- Brazil is the largest country and covers almost half the continent.
- The Amazon rainforest in South America is the largest tropical rainforest in the world.
- Every 78 seconds, an area of rainforest the size of a football pitch is destroyed through deforestation, wiping out more than 137 species of plants and animals every single day!