

LEARN AT CHESTERZOO

RAINFOREST IN A BOX

Rainforests are one of the most important habitats on Earth – they may cover less than 6% of the Earth's land-surface, but they are home to around half the animal and plant species on the planet!

We're going to recreate this wonderful habitat in a box! All you really need to start is a box and then let your imagination go wild with natural and craft materials.

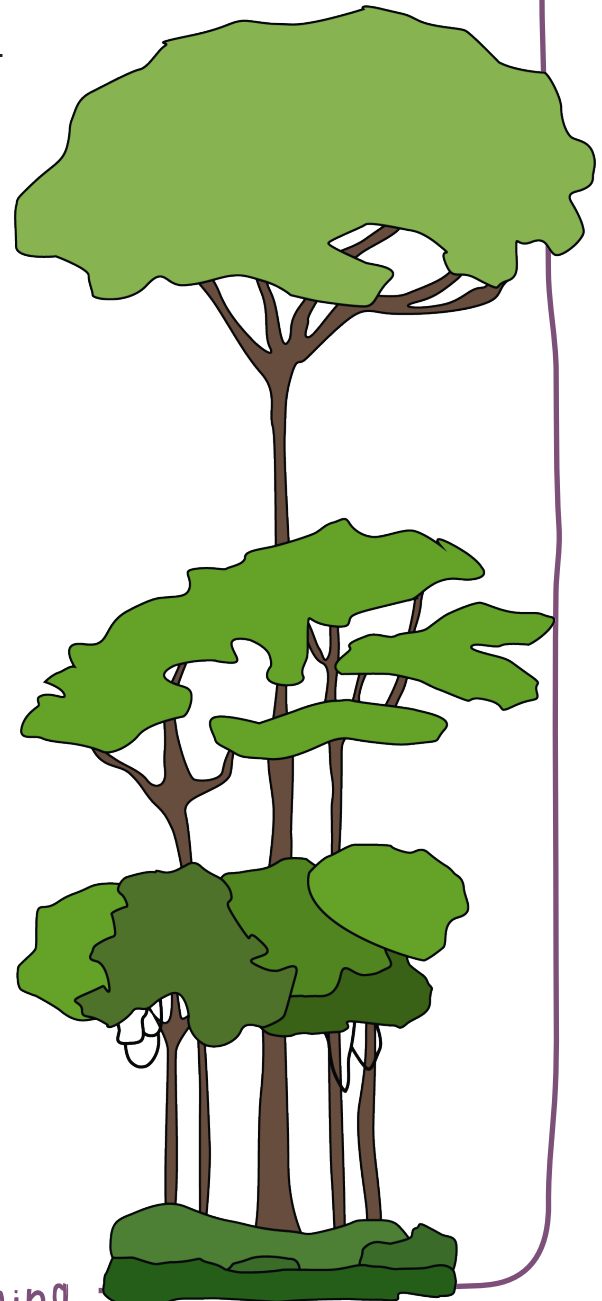
Things you might find useful:

- A box (a shoe box or something similar).
- A selection of twigs and sticks (different thicknesses and lengths, but they need to be able to fit inside the box)
- A selection of leaves, moss and other natural materials.
- Coloured tissue paper (ideally, brown and green)
- Thick paper or card (ideally, green)
- PVA glue, sticky tack or tape
- Poster paints (black/green/brown/yellow/white)
- String or garden twine
- Paper and pens/pencils

DID YOU KNOW?

Chester Zoo helps to protect animals in rainforests all around the world through our conservation work.

Some of the rainforest animals we help include chimpanzees in Nigeria, lemurs in Madagascar, songbirds in Indonesia and parrots in South America!



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Step 1

Gather all your materials together. It's quite fun to go looking around your garden for things that could make the forest floor, trees and canopy.

Or if you can't find anything outside, you could draw different trees and shrubs on coloured card ready to recreate your rainforest. You could even use the cardboard from inside toilet rolls for trees!

Step 2

Rainforests are really, really dense with vegetation, so we need a background that shows this.

Begin by painting the inside of your box in a dark colour.

It's not all darkness down there though...

If you've got some lighter coloured paints or glitter glue, you could layer them up on top to show where the light comes through the trees.



Step 3

The different layers of the rainforest are so important for the animals that live there, they provide shelter and food for a variety of species.

Use sticks and leaves to make the trees. Using sticks of different sizes will help show the variation within this habitat. If you can't find any sticks, you could draw your own trees, colour in and cut out the trees we've included, or make some of your own using what you can find.

Use sticky tack or glue to set in place.

DID YOU KNOW?

Rainforest plants absorb up to 50% of the carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere each year.

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Step 4

Let's add some detail to our rainforest scene!

The forest floor is full of plants and wildlife. You can add texture to your forest floor by using tissue paper and mixing it with PVA glue, then molding it into the desired shape.

You could sprinkle moss, grass or dried leaves to create the illusion of fallen leaves and leaf litter where you'll find lots of invertebrates living.



Step 5

To make vines, you can use string, garden twine or foliage. Most vines actually start off life on the ground and then grow upwards, using the trees for support – so make sure your vines touch the ground!

You could also add some extra vegetation using coloured paper or card to add extra depth to your rainforest.

Step 6

Find out which animals live in the different layers of the rainforest and add them to your box. You could use any toy animals you have or you could try drawing your favourite rainforest animals.

We've provided a few rainforest animals from different rainforests around the world to get you started.



DID YOU KNOW?

The tallest trees that make up the emergent layer can be over 50m tall!
How tall are you? How many more of you would you need to reach the top?

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RAINFOREST ANIMALS



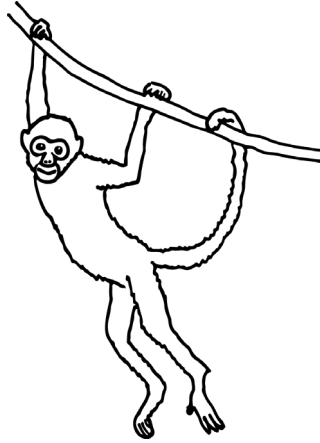
Bali starling



Blue morpho butterfly



Hornbill



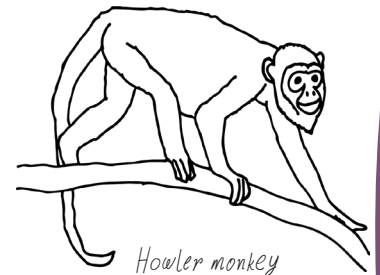
Spider monkey



Sumatran laughingthrush



Fruit bat



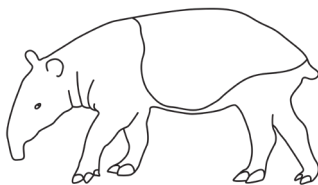
Howler monkey



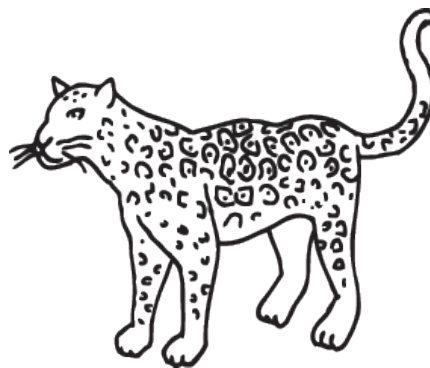
Sloth



Chimpanzee



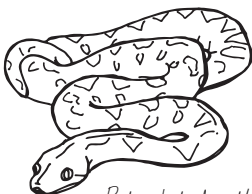
Malayan tapir



Jaguar



Sun bear



Reticulated python



Bird eating spider

Can you think of any more?

Why not draw your favourite rainforest animals to include in your box?

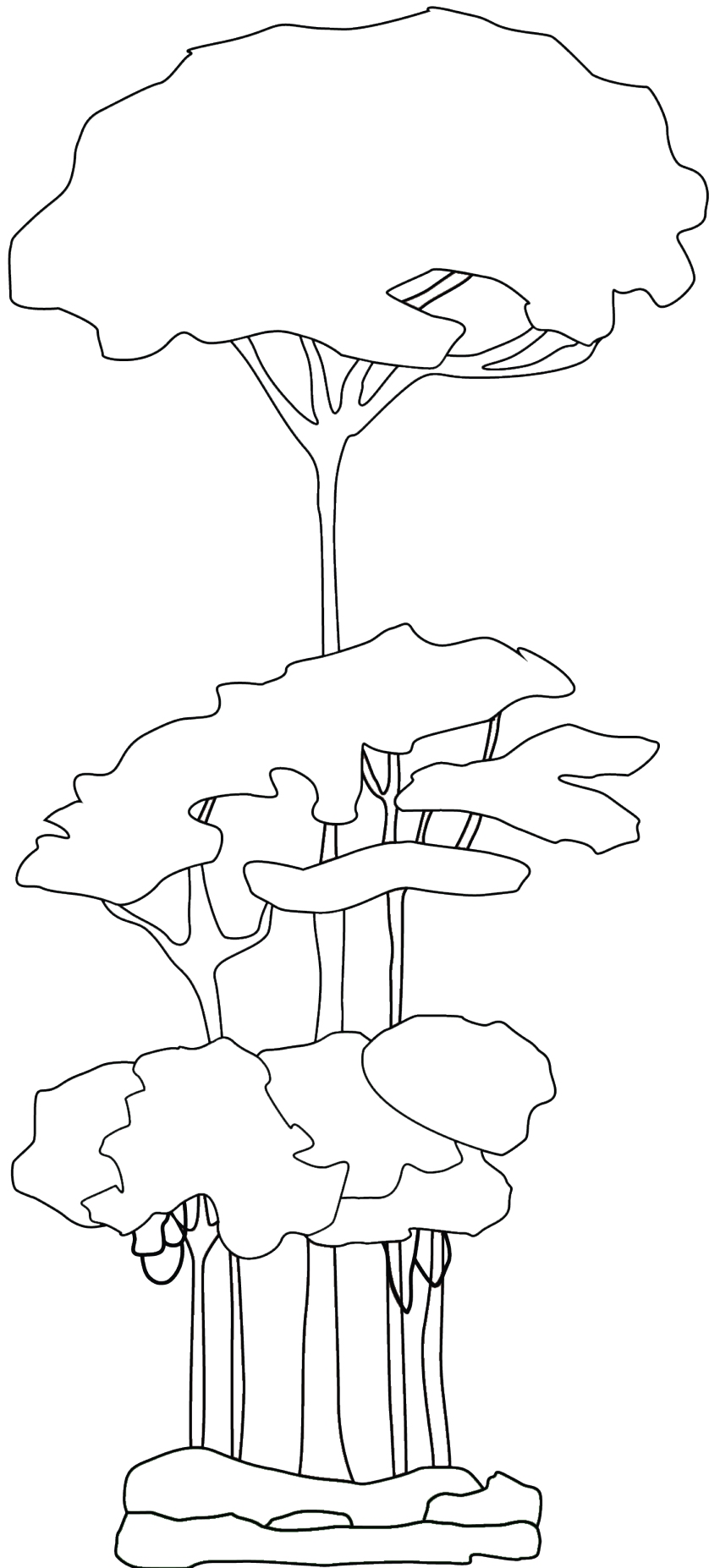
RAINFOREST TREES

Emergent layer

Canopy layer

Understory layer

The Forest Floor



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Rainforests around the world

Can you find out where the rainforests of the world are on a map and which animals live there? Create a 'Rainforest in a box' for each different rainforest around the world.

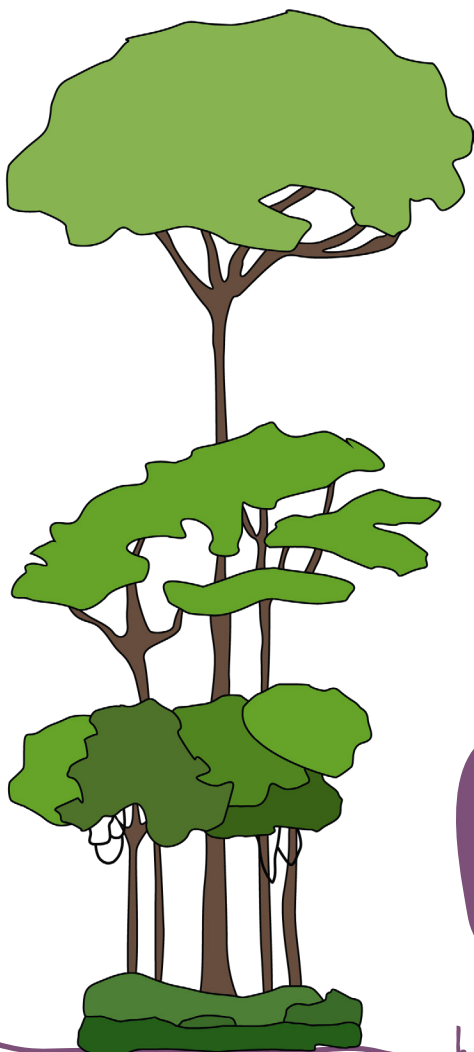
e.g. A Madagascan rainforest with all the different types of lemur or a South American rainforest with leopards and crocodiles!

The layers of the rainforest

Do you know what the layers of the rainforest are? Different animals live in the different layers. Create a different 'Rainforest in a box' for each layer of the rainforest showing how they're different.

Plants, plants, plants!

Do you know where chocolate comes from? Lots of the things we eat and use come from plants in the rainforest. Find out about the different plants that grow in rainforests and try to include them in your 'Rainforest in a box'.



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We'd love to see what you create.
Share your 'Rainforest in a box' with us on Twitter!