

South America and the Amazon Rainforest – Geography – Year 5 – Knowledge Organiser.

Where is South America and the Amazon Rainforest?

- South America is the fourth largest continent in the world.
- It is primarily located in the Southern Hemisphere.
- It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west.
- South America is home to the Amazon Rainforest – the largest tropical rainforest in the world.
- The Amazon Rainforest can be located between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

Key geographical features of the Amazon Rainforest?

Climate	Soils	Plants	Animals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hot (20-28°C) • Sun is overhead all year round so there is no seasonal variation. • wet (2000mm rainfall per year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain washes away nutrients from soil. • Soil is not very fertile. • Humus layer of rotting leaf-fall is very thin (heat speeds up decomposition). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most trees are evergreen. • Continual growing season.. • Epiphytes (plants that feed off other plants and take moisture from the air) e.g. ferns. • Absorb CO2 and release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many species of animals live in the tropical rainforest. • Food is plentiful and grows all year. • Hundreds of different types of monkeys, snakes and birds. • Thousands of insect species live in the tropical rainforest.



Layers of the rainforest.

Emergent Layer (50m)

- tallest trees

Canopy (30m)

- engine of the rainforest
- captures most sunlight

Understorey (20m)

- younger trees

Shrub Layer (2-5m)

- ferns, bushes etc.

Forest Floor (0m)

- dark and quiet
- decomposition, sometimes flooded

Key Vocabulary:

Continent

Emergent layer

Canopy layer

Understorey layer

Forest floor

Deforestation

Tropics

Reasons for deforestation:

Natural forest fires.

Farmers – logging to create space for new crops and cattle ranches.

Palm oil – produced in the trees and used for soaps, washing powders and food dressing.