

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

- Key Vocabulary:**
- Continent - continuous expanse of land.
- Emergent layer - the top layer of a rainforest.
- Canopy layer - made of overlapping leaves and branches.
- Understorey layer - warm, damp, and sheltered layer.
- Forest floor - the lowest layer of a rainforest.
- Deforestation - the clearing, or cutting down, of forests.
- Tropics - the region of Earth around the equator.



## 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.



## 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.