

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. • 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. 	<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 - 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.

- 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.