

Rainforest Vocabulary

biodiversity The wide variety of living things on the Earth.	botanist Someone who studies plants.	camouflage The way that an animal hides itself by changing its body shape or colour to blend into its surroundings.	canopy The tallest layer of trees in a forest.	carbon dioxide A gas (also called CO ₂) that is released when fuel burns and when animals breathe. Plants absorb it.
climate The weather and temperature usually found in an area over a long period of time.	cloud forest A forest that gets all of its moisture from mist rather than rain.	colony A group of the same kind of animal that live and work closely together.	crown The very top of a tree.	deforestation The destruction of trees over large areas.
drip tips Pointed tips on leaves that help water to run off them.	emergent layer Very tall rainforest trees that rise above all the other trees around them.	equatorial Equatorial rainforests grow near the equator (the area around the middle of the Earth). It is very warm here.	evergreen Trees that have some leaves all through the year.	extinct An animal or plant species that has died out completely.
habitat The place where a living thing makes its home.	hibernate To sleep without waking or feeding during cold weather.	humid Having a high level of moisture in the air.	indigenous A living thing that belongs naturally to an area.	liana Rope-like plants that grow up trees.
monsoon Wind that changes direction with the seasons.	temperate Places where it is neither very hot nor very cold. Usually with warm summers and cool winters.	tropical Around the middle of the world in the region called the Tropics, where it is very warm all year.	understorey The layer of vegetation in a forest below the canopy but above the ground.	vegetation The plant life growing in a certain area.

The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry

Grade: K – 3rd

What kids will learn:

Kids will learn about the animals of the rainforest and what they need to live.

Activities:

Part 1: Introduce the story. (20 – 25 minutes)

Animal Pictures:

Materials

- Reader's theater script for *The Great Kapok Tree* (See binder)
- Board or chart paper
- Chalk or markers
- Drawing paper
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Copy of the book *Life in the Rainforests* by Lucy Baker



1. Brainstorm the animals of the rainforest.

- a. Show pictures of the various animals in the rainforest. (Find pictures in books such as *Life in the Rainforests* by Lucy Baker or *Rainforest* by Barbara Taylor. You can paraphrase information from the book.)
- b. Ask the kids – first in pairs, and then as a whole group-to talk about which of these animals or creatures they like. Write their ideas on the board or chart paper.

2. Choose and draw an animal. Distribute paper and drawing materials. Ask the kids to draw a picture of the animal they like. They might show in the drawing what their animal eats, where he sleeps, and what he likes to do.

3. Share drawings. Gather kids in a circle and ask for volunteers to share and explain their drawing.

What's the Story? The rain forest is the natural habitat of many of the world's animals. The Great Kapok Tree, by Lynne Cherry tells the story of the importance of the kapok tree through the voice of the animals of the rain forest. It is a plea to save their environment. As such, students will recognize the importance of the rain forest, and why we should protect this environment.

Cool Words: Help the kids understand each suggested cool word as you come to it in the story. After the story, ask the kids if they remember any words that stood out in the reading. Invite the kids to pick words they like or want to remember and write them.

Depend – to get help or support: rely

Gash – a deep cut

Pollen – yellow powder of plants

Miracles – amazing or wonderful and hard to explain

Slither – to slide

Murmur – soft or low sound

Plod – move in a slow heavy way

Dapple - to mark something with patches or spots

Part 2: Read the story. (20 – 30 min)

Introduce the book or Reader's Theater script *The Great Kapok Tree*

1. Have you ever heard of a Kapok Tree?
2. Where do you think we could find a Kapok Tree?
3. Read the story, *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry. (staff reads even if using Reader's Theater)
4. Ask questions after reading the related page or Reader's Theater item.
 - a. Why do you think the man is in the forest?
 - b. How is the kapok tree important to the snake/boa constrictor?
 - c. What will happen to the floor of the rainforest if the kapok tree isn't saved?
 - d. Why is the jaguar concerned?
 - e. How is the kapok tree important to animals and humans?
 - f. Why do you think the man left the forest?

Part 3: Discuss the story.

Why do you think we should save the kapok tree? Write students main ideas on the board.

Part 4 : Connect to the story. (15 – 20 min)

- Draw a kapok tree and two animals from the story that helped to save it. Then write one reason why we should protect the kapok tree. Give sheet with sentence starters or write them on the board.
 - Re-visit the Great Kapok Tree – If you have access to YouTube, do below activity :
1. Who can recall details from the story The Great Kapok Tree?
 2. Today we are going to listen to an animation of the Great Kapok Tree.
 3. Who can tell me what is an animation?
 4. How is an animation different from the way we viewed the story yesterday?
 5. Let's view the animation of the Great Kapok Tree. Animation can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWQ0aJtdYs0>

Part 5 : Wrap up the story.

- a. Discussion and Journal Topic: What can we do to save the rainforest?
- b. Discussion and Journal Topic: How do the animals in the rainforest depend on the Great Kapok Tree?
- c. Students can create a Fact Mobile. (Find directions in binder or Write & Publish Activity Center.)
- d. Research animals in the rainforest and create "Creature Cards" (See template)



Grades: 4 - 8

Sessions: Two or more 30 minute sessions

Directions:

- Read through the script and decide how **you will read the script** to your students.
- Decide which parts to assign to students based on their reading ability.
 - If you have more than 15 students, you can assign the narrator parts to multiple students.
 - The 2 Butterflies should read in unison. The same with the Porcupines.
- Make 15 copies of the script.
- Read the script to your students. Have fun by changing your voice, and possibly posture, for each part.
- Give scripts to students telling them their parts.
- Go over the directions below with your students.
- **Allow students time to practice** before reading with the group.

Tips on Reader's Theater by Aaron Shepard

- Highlight your speeches in your copy of the script. Mark only words you will speak—not the identifying role tags or the stage directions. (A yellow nonfluorescent marker works best.)
- Underline the words that tell about anything you'll need to act out—words in either the stage directions or other readers' speeches. If you're given extra stage directions later, write them in the margin in pencil.
- Read through your part silently. If there are words you don't understand or aren't sure how to pronounce, look them up in a dictionary. If there are words you must remember to stress, underline them. If there are places you'll need to pause between sentences, mark them with a couple of slashes (/). For instance, a narrator must sometimes pause to help the audience know that there is a change of scene or time.
- Read through your part out loud. If you're a character, think about how that character would sound. Should you try a funny voice? How would the character feel about what's happening in the story? Can you speak as if you were feeling that way?
- Stand up and read through the script again. If you're a character, try out faces and movements. Would your character stand or move in a special way? Can you do that? If possible, practice this in front of a mirror.

Before giving readers their scripts, help them by reading the script or its source story. Effective modeling will give them a head start against any difficulties. Discuss the difference between characters and narrators. For example, tell students, "In the story, character parts are inside the quotation marks, and narrator parts are outside."

By Aaron Shepard

Rehearsing

Here are pointers your readers should remember both in rehearsal and performance.

- Hold your script at a steady height, but make sure it doesn't hide your face. If there's anyone you can't see in the front row of the audience, your script is too high.
- While you speak, try to look up often, not just at your script. When you do look down at it, keep your head up and move just your eyes.
- S-l-o-w d-o-w-n. Say each syl-la-ble clear-ly.
- TALK LOUDLY! You have to be heard in the back row.
- Speak with feeling. Audiences love a ham!
- Stand and sit straight. Keep your hands and feet still if they're not doing anything useful!
- Face the audience as much as you can, whether you're moving or standing still. If you're rehearsing without an audience, pretend it's there anyway.
- Narrators, you're important even when the audience isn't looking at you. You control the story! Be sure to give the characters enough time to do what they must. And remember that you're talking to the audience, not to yourself.
- Characters, you give the story its life! Remember to be your character even when you're not speaking, and be sure to react to the other characters.

To help readers get full vocal power, have them check their breathing. To do this, they should place their hands on their stomachs and inhale. If they're really filling their lungs, their hands will be pushed out. (The diaphragm muscle gives the lungs more room by pushing down on the stomach, making it expand forward.) If their hands move in, it means they're filling only the top parts of their lungs.

Tongue twisters and other vocal exercises can help readers speak more clearly. Try to warm them up with such exercises before rehearsals and performances.

To help readers stand straight, ask them to imagine a string tied to their chests that is pulling up on them.

Reader's Theater for *The Great Kapok Tree* By Lynne Cherry

What's the Story? The rain forest is the natural habitat of many of the world's animals. *The Great Kapok Tree* tells the story of the importance of the kapok tree through the voice of the animals of the rain forest. It is a plea to save their environment.



Parts (15): Narrator 1, Narrator 2, The Man, Monkey, Boa, 2 Butterflies, Toucan, Frog, Jaguar, 2 Porcupines, Anteater, Sloth, Boy

Narrator 1: One man was walking into the rain forest. Moments before, the forest had been alive with the sounds of squawking birds and howling monkeys. Now all was quiet as the creatures watched the man and wondered why he had come. The man stopped and pointed to a great Kapok tree. Then he took the ax he carried and struck the trunk of the tree.

The man: Whack! Whack! Whack!

Narrator 2: The sounds of the blows rang through the forest. The wood of the tree was very hard.

The man: Chop! Chop! Chop!

Narrator 2: The man wiped off the sweat that ran down his face and neck.

The man: Whack! Chop! Whack! Chop!

Narrator 1: Soon the man grew tired. He sat down to rest at the foot of the great Kapok tree. Before he knew it, the heat and hum of the forest had lulled him to sleep. A boa constrictor lived in the Kapok tree. He slithered down its trunk to where the man was sleeping. He looked at the gash the ax had made in the tree. Then the huge snake slid very close to the man and hissed in his ear.

Boa: Senor, this tree is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Do not chop it down.

Narrator 2: Two butterflies flew near the sleeping man's ear

Butterflies: Senor, our home is in this Kapok tree, and we fly from tree to tree and flower to flower collecting pollen. In this way we pollinate the trees and flowers throughout the rain forest. You see, all living things depend on one another.

Narrator 2: A troupe of monkeys scampered down from the canopy of the Kapok tree. They chattered to the sleeping man.

Monkey: Senor, we have seen the ways of man. You chop down one tree, then come back for another and another. The roots of these great trees will wither and die, and there will be nothing left to hold the earth in place. When the heavy rains come, the soil will be washed away and the forest will become a desert.

Narrator 2: A toucan flew down from the canopy.

Toucan: Senor! You must not cut down this tree. We have flown over the rain forest and seen what happens once you begin to chop down the trees. Many people settle on the land. They set fire to clear the underbrush, and soon the forest disappears. Where once there was life and beauty only black and smoldering ruins remain.

Narrator 2: Some bright and small tree frogs crawled along the edge of a leaf. In squeaky voices they piped in the man's ear.

Frog: Senor, a ruined rain forest means ruined lives . . . many ruined lives. You will leave many of us homeless if you chop down this great Kapok tree.

Narrator 1: A jaguar had been sleeping along a branch in the middle of the tree. Because his spotted coat blended into the dappled light and shadows of the understory, no one had noticed him. Now he leapt down and padded silently over to the sleeping man. He growled in his ear.

Jaguar: Senor, the Kapok tree is home to many birds and animals. If you cut it down, where will I find my dinner?

Narrator 2: Two tree porcupines swung down from branch to branch and whispered to the man.

Porcupines: Senor, do you know what we animals and humans need in order to live? Oxygen. And, Senor, do you know what trees produce? Oxygen! If you cut down the forests you will destroy that which gives us all life.

Narrator 2: An anteater climbed down the Kapok tree with her baby clinging to her back. The unstriped anteater said to the sleeping man.

Anteater: Senor, you are chopping down this tree with no thought for the future. And surely you know that what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today. The big man tells you to chop down a beautiful tree. He does not think of his own children, who tomorrow must live in a world without trees.

Narrator 1: A three-toed sloth had begun climbing down from the canopy when the men first appeared. Only now did she reach the ground. Plodding ever so slowly over to the sleeping man, she spoke in her deep and lazy voice.

Sloth: Senor, how much is beauty worth? Can you live without it? If you destroy the beauty of the rain forest, on what would you feast your eyes?

Narrator 2: A child from the Yanomamo tribe who lived in the rain forest knelt over the sleeping man. He murmured in his ear.

Boy: Senor, when you awake, please look upon us all with new eyes.

Narrator 1: The man awoke with a start. Before him stood the rain forest child, and all around him, staring, were the creatures who depended upon the great Kapok tree. What wondrous and rare animals they were! The man looked about and saw the sun jewels amidst the dark green forest. Strange and beautiful plants seemed to dangle in the air, suspended from the great Kapok tree. The man smelled the fragrant perfume of their flowers. He felt the steamy mist rising from the forest floor. But he heard no sound, for the creatures were strangely silent. The man stood and picked up his ax. He swung back his arm as though to strike the tree. Suddenly he stopped. He turned and looked at the animals and the child. He hesitated. Then he dropped the ax and walked out of the rain forest

**Earth Day**

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Young Scientist

- ▶ [All About Eve](#)
- ▶ [Live Interview](#)
- ▶ [Frog Finds](#)

Inside the Rain Forest

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Rain Forest Careers

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Activity

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Lesson Helpers

With millions of rain-forest acres disappearing each year, conservationists say it's high time to protect these tropical and temperate treasures. This Earth Day, why not make rain forests your focus of study? These precious ecosystems are a great way to add life to your earth-science curriculum. Start by delving into the informative articles in this Special Online Issue, then turn to the activities and reproducibles that follow to extend your unit.

ACTIVITIES

[Creature Card](#) (PDF): Put a face on the rain, forest problem by inviting students to select and research a single forest animal. Using this ready-to-print "trading" card as a guide, have students find facts about the animal they choose. (The reproducible includes a starter list of forest animals; students may select from the list or choose an animal on their own.) Students can use Grolier Online resources presented in this site as well as other sites such as www.animalsoftherainforest.com. To complete the cards, encourage students to download photos of their animals or to try their own hand at illustration. Have students present their findings to the class.

[Where Are Tropical Rain Forests?](#) (PDF): In this activity, students put their geography skills to the test as they use a map and key to locate the world's tropical rain forests. After completing the activity, students should demonstrate an understanding that tropical rain forests are near the Equator, between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. [Answers to reproducible: 1. B; 2. C; 3. A; 4. B; 5. B; 6. Answers will vary; possible answers include: near the Equator, between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, on several continents.]

[Make a Study Outline](#) (PDF): When tackling nonfiction passages like the ones in this online issue about rain forests, it can be helpful for students to create outlines or other graphic organizers. In this activity, we provide the skeleton of an outline for students to complete using our lead article. Please note that students can add additional numbered details to the outline if they choose by using the extra lines included under each section. In outlining the information offered about rain forests, students will identify the main ideas and important details of the passage. Encourage students to practice using this outlining technique with other texts.

[Create a Canopy \(Science Experiment\)](#): Rain forests are wet not only because they receive a lot of rain, but also because their vegetation "recycles" water. That is, the rain-forest canopy, or "roof," traps moisture inside the forest. To help students understand why a tropical rain forest is so steamy and wet, demonstrate the canopy effect using a healthy potted houseplant, a clear plastic bag, and a large rubber band or piece of tape. Water the plant, then place the plastic bag over the plant. Secure the edges of the bag to the pot with tape or the rubber band. Place the plant in a sunlit spot and observe for several days. (For a control, water a second plant but do not put a bag on top of it. Place it in the same spot as your bagged plant.) Have students record the results. What happens to the plastic bag? (Droplets of moisture form on it.) What part of the rain forest acts like the plastic bag in this experiment? (the top layer, or canopy)

Read All About It!

There are many great children's books about rain forests. Two to check out are: *Nature's Green Umbrella* by Gail Gibbons (William Morrow & Co., 1994) *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry (Harcourt Children's Books, 1990) Although this is a picture book, older readers will love hearing it read aloud just as much as younger kids.

Special Online Issue: Inside the Rain Forest

Creature Card

In this online issue, you read about the amazing number of species that make their homes in rain forests. Now learn more about your favorite forest critter! Choose an animal from the box below, then do some research to fill in the blanks on the creature card. In the space at the top of the card, draw a picture or paste a photo of your animal.

Animals

Aye-aye
Capuchin monkey
Eclectus parrot
Fruit bat
Gecko
Glass frog
Golden toad
Katydid
Komodo dragon
Leaf cutter ant
Lemur
Ocelot
Piranha
Pygmy marmoset
Python
Scarlet macaw
Tapir
Toucan
Tree frog

Creature Card

Animal's name _____

Type of animal (circle one):

Fish Amphibian Reptile Mammal Bird Insect Arthropod

Habitat: _____

Favorite foods: _____

Enemies: _____

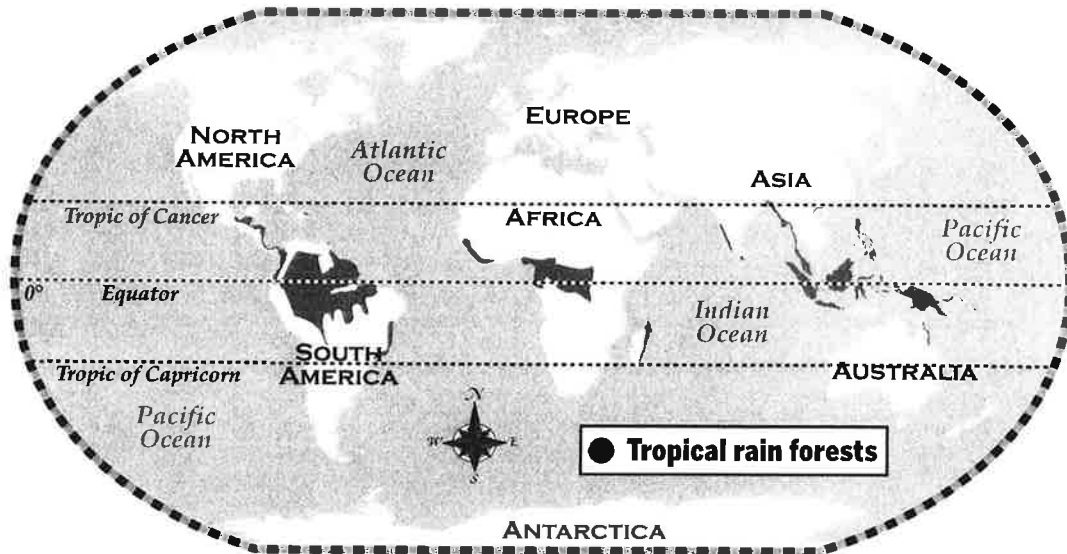
Interesting fact: _____

Endangered? (circle one) Yes No

Special Online Issue: Inside the Rain Forest

Where Are Tropical Rain Forests?

This map shows the locations of the world's tropical rain forests. Use it to answer the questions that follow.



- Which of these continents has no tropical rain forests?
☐ A. Africa
☐ B. Europe
☐ C. South America
- The _____ passes through South America, Africa, and Australia.
☐ A. Equator
☐ B. Tropic of Cancer
☐ C. Tropic of Capricorn
- Which continent has the largest tropical rain forest?
☐ A. South America
☐ B. Asia
☐ C. North America
- The Tropic of Capricorn is located _____ of the Equator.
☐ A. north
☐ B. south
☐ C. west
- To get to the nearest tropical rain forest, a person in the central United States would have to travel _____.
☐ A. north
☐ B. south
☐ C. east
- Finish this sentence: The world's tropical rain forests are located _____

SCHOLASTIC SKILLS PAGE

Name: _____

Special Online Issue: Inside the Rain Forest

Making a Study Outline

After reading this Special Online Issue, use the article titled "Saving the World's Rain Forests" to fill in this outline. It will help you remember important ideas from the article.

Saving the World's Rain Forests

A. Rain forests are rich in life.

1. _____

2. _____

B. Many medicines come from rain forests.

1. _____

C. Rain forests are being destroyed.

1. _____

2. _____

D. People are helping rain forests.

1. _____

2. _____

E. Kids can help, too.

1. _____



A Guide for *Generation Fix* 6th-8th At a Glance

Below are activities we strongly suggest you use in implementing the Responsibility Unit. For additional activities, please refer to the actual KidzLit guide book.

What kids will learn:

Youth will learn how to solve problems and make a difference by working with others and through perseverance

Materials:

- Kidzlit: *Generation Fix*, Pencils, butcher paper, paper, markers,

Before You Get Started

- Read *Your Planet* pages 59-66
- Read *A Breath of Fresh Air* pages 67-74

1. Suggested Activities:

- **Introduction: 20- 30 minutes *Figuring It Out?***
 - **Read and Respond:** Before you introduce *Generation Fix*, show the cover and explain that this is a collection of true stories about kids. Explain that you're going to read a short story that is related to the subject of the book. Read the story at the top of page 12 and then use the following questions to start a discussion.
 - What do you think about the young man's actions?
 - What else do you think he might have done?
 - How would that have changed the situation?
 - What would you have done in the situation?
 - What do you think of the story?
 - What do you think it means?
 - If this is a story about a young man doing good work, what do you think is the theme of *Generation fix*?

2. Read "*Generation Fix*"- *Your Planet* pages 59-66 (15-20minutes)

- Read the book aloud to your group, pausing occasionally for the kids' comments and questions about the story, its illustrations, or words they don't know

3. Discuss 10-15 minutes

- Prepare three butcher paper charts, each with of these headings:
 - Situation
 - Solution
 - Strategies
- Summarize the story by asking the kids to identify the situation Ann faced, the solution she designed to solve the problem and the strategies she used. Note their responses on the butcher paper charts.



4. Cool Words

- Create your own cool words by helping kids understand difficult or new words as you come to it in the story. As you read the story, read the word, briefly define it, and reread the word and read the rest of the sentence

5. Try This Activity!: 30-45 minutes

- Read the last paragraph on page 66. Kate says "In the community she lives in, dumping oil alongside the barn is a big issue. But in different places there are environmental issues. Look around your community and see what needs to be done there".
 - Have students Think-Pair-Share with their partners of some environmental issues in their after school program, schools, community, or city. Have them write down and illustrate what they would or could do to help bring change.

6. Read "Generation Fix"-A Breath of Fresh Air pages 67-74 (25-30 minutes)

- Read the book aloud to your group, pausing occasionally for the kids' comments and questions about the story, its illustrations, or words they don't know

7. Talk It Over 15-20 minutes

Allow the kids to react to the story. First in pairs, and then as whole group discuss the question below:

- What was the issue that Ann saw early on in the story?
- What is her plan to save our ecosystem?
 - Are her actions heroic or expected?
- What are some things you can do save our environment/ecosystem?

8. Cool Words:

- Create your own cool words by helping kids understand difficult or new words as you come to it in the story. As you read the story, read the word, briefly define it, and reread the word and read the rest of the sentence.

9. Try This Activity!: 15-20minutes

- Partner the youth in their Think-Pair-Share group. Have them think about a place they would like to clean up and/or save for sake of their environment and animals.
 - Have them brainstorm what steps they would have to take to begin their process (what is the location, who can to talk to- to begin the process, what is the goal, how long will this take, etc.)
 - Have them share out

10. Wrap It Up: 30 minute *Improving Our Program*

- Invite the kids to think about aspects of their after school program that they feel could be improved. List these on the "Situation" butcher paper chart. Then discuss the kids' ideas about how to solve the problems or make a specific improvement. Note these on the "Solution" chart. If possible, plan with the kids to implement one or more of their suggestions. Guide them to thinking through what actions would be necessary. Discuss if any of the ideas the young activist used would work for your issue. As a group, decide the actions you want to make and note these on the "Strategies" chart and begin improving your program.

Other Related Thematic Activities

Art tab-

- Anatomy & Ecosystems
- How can you contribute to a healthy ecology

Science tab

- *The Greens Activity Guide*