

Rainforest Cafe®

WELCOME TO  
CHA CHA'S  
CLASS

$2+5=7$

LESSONS PLANS



GRADES 5-6

# ACTIVITY

## INTRODUCTION TO RAINFORESTS

TIME ESTIMATION:  
10 MINUTES

### MATERIALS

- blank drawing paper
- pencils, markers, colored pencils, etc.

### INTRODUCTION

Before learning more about rainforests and without any prompts or guidelines, have the students take a few minutes to draw a picture of a rainforest. When they are finished, ask the students to share their drawings and/or hang them up in the classroom. Are there similarities? Differences?

After finishing your rainforest curriculum, have the students draw the rainforest again. Allow more time for the second drawing or it may be taken home as an assignment. Have the students compare their first and second drawings. What are the differences?

- More diverse plants and animals?
- A structured layer of shrubs, undergrowth, trees, and canopies?
- Indigenous people?
- Deforestation?
- Weather?

**LESSON PLAN**  
**RAINFOREST SUMMIT****TIME ESTIMATION:**  
**VARIABLE; SEE SAMPLE SCHEDULES BELOW.****SUMMARY**

Students will work in pairs or small groups to research an issue affecting rainforests and then participate in a mock rainforest summit to present a solution to the problem.

**OBJECTIVES****STUDENTS WILL:**

- use reliable sources to research a conservation issue;
- work in teams to develop a stance on an issue using scientific research;
- stage a “Rainforest Summit” to discuss the issue, propose solutions, and vote on a plan to protect rainforests;
- and discuss how conservation issues are complex problems that affect humans, animals, and wild habitats.

**INTRODUCTION**

Rainforests are one of the oldest and most diverse ecosystems on Earth. While they cover only 6% of the planet’s surface, they produce almost half of the oxygen we need to breathe and are home to approximately half of all living things! Additionally, rainforests provide valuable resources such as wood, food, medicines, and more.

But rainforests around the world are under threat, jeopardizing these benefits. Threats include logging, agriculture, cattle ranching, illegal burning, human encroachment, and more. One and a half acres of rainforest are lost every second with tragic consequences to wildlife, the ecosystem, native communities, and the planet as a whole. The nearest rainforest could be thousands of miles away and it still has a great effect on your everyday life.

How are conservation issues like this addressed in the real world? World leaders, scientists, organizations, and activists collaborate to find the best solutions for both the environment and people. As a class, you will demonstrate this decision-making process with a Rainforest Summit and then evaluate its outcome.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Teachers: Familiarize yourself with the activity by reading all scenario cards on the following pages.
2. Based on the size of your class, select at least three groups to use in the scenario.
3. Divide the class into even-sized groups, one for each fictional group you have chosen. Each group will represent a different faction in an environmental issue. The issue at hand is the deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest and its effects on a particular species of macaw. And the goal of the summit is to form a policy that is accepted by the all groups.
  - a. Group 1 represents an organization of environmental activists.
  - b. Group 2 represents a team of researchers who study macaws.
  - c. Group 3 represents a small native community of low-impact farmers.
  - d. Group 4 represents large-scale cattle ranchers.
  - e. Group 5 represents a brand new ecotourism company.
4. Print and distribute the scenario cards to the students. Give the students time to familiarize themselves with the situation. Then, depending on how much available time you have, allot a certain amount of time for research, planning, and creating a presentation. This activity can be as simple or as in depth as you have time for.

### SAMPLE SCHEDULE | 5 DAYS

Day 1 - Break up into groups, review scenario cards, discuss group's position on the issue, and research the issue.

Day 2 - Continue researching the issue if needed and begin brainstorming a plan to present at the summit. Discuss solutions and decide as a group on one solution to present. Work on presentation (slideshow, poster, speech, model, etc.).

Day 3 - Continue working on presentation.

Day 4 - Finalize presentation. Discuss plan for presenting at the summit - Who will lead? Who will be in charge of presentation materials (clicking through the slide show, holding the poster, handing out paper, etc.)? What are the main points you need to get across? How will you answer questions from the other groups? What questions will you ask the other groups? What parts, if any, of your plan is your group willing to compromise if needed?

Day 5 - Rainforest Summit. \*Can continue for more than one day if needed.

### SAMPLE SCHEDULE | 3 DAYS

Day 1 - Break up into groups, review scenario cards, discuss group's position on the issue, and research the issue. Discuss solutions and decide as a group on one solution to present. Work on presentation (slideshow, poster, speech, model, etc.).

Day 2 - Finalize presentation. Discuss plan for presenting at the summit.

Day 3 - Rainforest Summit.

## INSTRUCTIONS (continued)

### SAMPLE SCHEDULE | 1 DAY

10 Minutes – Break up into groups, review scenario cards, and discuss group’s position on the issue.

20 Minutes – Research the issues and decide on one solution to present.

30 Minutes – Work on presentation (slideshow, poster, speech, model, etc.). Discuss plan for presenting at the summit.

30 Minutes – Rainforest Summit.

5. Stage a “Rainforest Summit” with all groups to discuss the issue. The goal of the summit is to develop and agree upon one plan to solve the issue.

a. Mediate between the groups as they take turns presenting their point of views and their solutions.

b. Compromises may be involved and the groups may want to take breaks to discuss the compromises they are or are not willing to make.

c. The final plan can include pieces of the groups’ individual plans or the class can vote on one unmodified plan.

## CONCLUSION

Ask the following questions to prompt students to discuss the outcome of the Rainforest Summit.

1. Were all groups satisfied with the outcome of the Rainforest Summit?

2. Is it always easy, or even possible, to come up with a solution acceptable to everyone involved?

3. Did your stance on the conservation issue change after listening to others present their point of view?

4. Would it ever be beneficial to compromise your point of view? When and why?

5. What role does science play in policy-making?

6. What role does public education play in awareness and action?

# RAINFOREST SUMMIT GROUPS

## GROUP 1: WILDLIFE HEROES

Your organization is a group of individuals fiercely dedicated to protecting wildlife and the environment. After identifying a conservation issue, you make it your mission to educate the public, persuade others to join your cause, and fight for change until politicians pass laws to protect the wildlife you are lobbying for.

## GROUP 2: RAINFOREST RESEARCHERS

You are a team of scientists who have been studying blue-throated macaws in a secluded region of the Amazon Rainforest for nearly a decade. These beautiful, rare birds build their nests in a certain species of tree and no others. Over the past couple of years, the macaw's habitat has gotten smaller with few trees to make nests in. According to your data, within a few years the number of macaws will be so low that there will be no chance for their population to recover, making them vulnerable to extinction.

Taking control of the situation is of utmost importance to your team. Therefore, you have come up with a proposal to increase macaw populations in the Amazon. Your plan is to catch as many wild macaws as you can, give them a safe place to nest, and release the offspring back into the wild. In your care, they will be safe from poachers, tourists, predators, and deforestation. This will also give the research team the chance to study the macaws up close!

## GROUP 3: NATIVE COMMUNITY

You are members of a tribe that lives in a small village in the Amazon Rainforest. For as long as anyone can remember, the people of your village have survived off of the land. You hunt animals for food, cut down trees for buildings and furniture, and clear small areas of land for farming and livestock. You take only what you need and have great respect for the natural world.

The small area of rainforest that your village occupies is also home to a flock of blue-throated macaws. These birds love to occasionally feed on your crops and make nests in trees that you need to cut down. While you respect the rainforest and its wildlife, your crops are vital to survival in this remote part of the world.

# RAINFOREST SUMMIT GROUPS

## GROUP 4: BIG CATTLE RANCHING, INC.

You are Board Members for Big Cattle Ranching, Inc., whose main business is raising enough cattle to satisfy the world's demand for steaks and cheeseburgers. You have purchased huge amounts of land in the Amazon Rainforest to provide enough grazing land for your cattle. Of course, after the land is purchased it must be cleared of all trees and brush before it is suitable for cattle ranching. Your land purchases are considered legal and you try your best to work with scientists regarding wildlife and the health of the ecosystem.

But business is booming and you need more land. You have recently learned that some of the land you intend to purchase is occupied by a native tribe and is home to hundreds of species of plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. You anticipate pushback, however buyers all over the world need the cattle you are raising.

## GROUP 5: ECO-CATIONS RESORT

You and your friends have decided to open an ecotourism destination in a remote area of the Amazon Rainforest. Ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”. This is right up your alley since you want to share your passion for nature while building environmental and cultural awareness and respect.

Eco-Cations Resort has been open for a couple of months now. The company offers eco-friendly accommodations, organic meals, and a variety of activities such as hiking, zip lining, bird watching, river rafting, and more! Unfortunately, attendance is low and you worry that if it doesn't pick up, you will have to shut down.

To make matters worse, you've recently heard that macaw populations are decreasing. Bird watching happens to be one of the main activities provided by the resort. You and your partners have an idea! There's a local native community that is very knowledgeable about macaws. Maybe Eco-Cations Resort can incorporate the village into their ecotourism plan, thus providing a better experience for your visitors as well as direct financial benefits for the local people and macaw conservation.

## ACTIVITY

# RAINFOREST SCAVENGER HUNT

TIME ESTIMATION:  
15-20 MINUTES OR TAKE HOME

## SUMMARY

Students will complete a scavenger hunt at home or in the classroom to see how many rainforest products they come into contact with each day.

## MATERIALS

- scavenger hunt list (next page)
- writing utensil

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute a scavenger hunt list to each student.
  - a. For an interesting twist, print the list of items on a blank sheet of paper or read them out loud and have the students write them down on a blank page in a notebook. Do not tell the students how these items are related.
2. Instruct the students to walk through their homes or classroom and check items off the list as they find them.
3. Discuss the student's findings as a class.
  - a. You could list the items on a whiteboard and record numbers or tallies for every student that found that item.
  - b. What items surprised them the most?
  - c. Discuss sustainable options that help protect rainforests such as reusable bags, palm oil free products, etc.

## SCAVENGER HUNT

- black pepper
- cayenne
- cinnamon
- cloves
- ginger
- nutmeg
- paprika
- sesame seeds
- turmeric
- vanilla
- avocado
- banana
- coconut
- coconut oil
- grapefruit
- guava
- lemon
- lime
- mango
- papaya
- passion fruit
- pineapple
- plantains
- tangerine
- brazil nuts
- cashews
- chocolate
- cola
- cucumbers
- macadamia nuts
- okra
- peanuts
- sugar cane
- tea
- coffee
- sweet potatoes
- palm oil (snack foods, baked goods)
- bamboo
- wood furniture, doors, floors, paneling, cabinets, carvings, toys, bowls (balsa, mahogany, rosewood, sandalwood, teak)
- wicker furniture
- jute (rope, rugs, burlap)
- bug spray
- perfume
- cough drops
- paint
- chewing gum
- golf balls
- rubber rain boots
- sleeping bags
- athletic shoes
- deodorant
- toothbrush
- mouthwash
- tissues
- stamps
- envelopes
- jeans
- mattress
- soap
- fishing line
- printer ink
- tires
- rubber balls
- house plants (orchids, philodendron, begonias, fiddle leaf fig, bromeliads)