



“A healthy, functioning environment is fundamental to people’s well-being – especially the poor and marginalised – the people who most depend on the environment for their livelihoods.” – WWF



# Welcome to Learn

## WWF's free termly poster resource for schools

This is the first in a set of three Learn posters produced with support from the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID). They're designed to help students build their understanding of the links between poverty and the environment.

This first poster explores the relationship between people and the environment in the Amazon, with a particular focus on the Madeira River. Poster 2 looks at the impact of these issues across Latin America. Poster 3 takes a broader view, and explores the links between poverty and the environment within the context of climate change. While the posters progressively zoom out, pupils are encouraged to zoom in, to take a look at their own attitudes and actions, and how these connect with the issues they have explored.

### Curriculum links

These Learn activities support study in some of the key concepts of the Global Dimension in Education – global citizenship, diversity, interdependence, social justice and sustainable development. They cover elements of the Geography curriculum at Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14), and areas of learning outlined in the New Primary Curriculum: 'Understanding English, communication and languages'; and 'Historical, geographical and social understanding'.

In Scotland, these activities support some of the key concepts of the Curriculum for Excellence 'Developing Global Citizens' interdisciplinary themes and cover elements of the science and social studies curriculum areas. They also link to the Eco Schools 'Sustaining our World' and 'Biodiversity' topics.



### Help us celebrate our 50th anniversary!



We are delighted to announce the launch of our new musical for schools – One Sun One World, specially written by Peter Rose and Anne Conlon to mark our 50th anniversary in 2011. To help us celebrate, we would like 50 performances (or more!) to take place. Do you think your school could rise to the challenge? For more information visit [www.wwf.org.uk/onesunoneworld](http://www.wwf.org.uk/onesunoneworld)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A2 full colour poster with inspirational quotation
- Questions to explore the poster image and quotation with pupils
- Starter activity ideas with links to further online activities
- 'In focus' – further information about the links between poverty and the environment.



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[www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

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# Learn Ideas for the classroom

## Key resources needed:

Before undertaking these activities, students will need to have watched the film, 'The Madeira River: Life Before the Dams' which can be found at:

[www.wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment](http://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment)

It will also be useful to have visited:

[www.wwf.org.uk/amazon](http://www.wwf.org.uk/amazon) and [www.panda.org/amazon](http://www.panda.org/amazon)



### Stepping into the rainforest

Invite students to imagine they have stepped into the place seen on film. They could be rowing along the river, or in a village on the banks. Ask: 'What can you see, smell, touch, hear, sense?' Students could produce a mood board or a photo montage, or write a short poem such as a haiku – a poem of three lines and 17 syllables.



### Living in the Amazon rainforest

Students imagine that they live by the Madeira River. Ask them to describe their life – using maps, photos, this poster and the film to help them. The following prompts may help: how did your family come to live in this area? How do you live? Do you go to school? What happens when you're ill? Where do you buy clothes? What are your hopes and dreams?



### Having it all

In the film, Teodoro Santiago says: "I have everything... for us to savour and to live comfortably." Do students feel the same way? Students could use Resource Sheet 1 to map out where their things and where Teodoro's things come from. Which are needs and which are wants?



### Life before the dams

Students should use Resource Sheet 2 to make notes about some of the characters in the film. They could invent autobiographies for one or more characters. Encourage them to think about and discuss what's good and not so good about their characters' present lifestyles and how they will be affected by the hydroelectric complex. Students should then create a piece of drama in which these characters explain their thoughts and feelings about the dam. Possible drama activities include: 'Hot seating' – the characters question someone playing the role of chief executive of the Hydroelectric Complex. Meeting – the characters might discuss how they should respond to the plans. Presentation – the characters could tell an audience in the UK about their lifestyle: the differences and similarities, and the ways in which they're linked.



### Decisions, decisions

The environments and the lives of the people in the film will soon be changed by the major decision to build the dams. But who made these decisions? And why?

Split the class into two groups. One group uses Resource Sheet 3 to decide the principles that would guide them if they were a national government. The other group thinks about community leaders and produces a list of key skills, a job description, or an advert for a community leader.

Both groups then watch the video at:

[www.santoantonioenergia.com.br/site/portal\\_mesa/en/home/home.aspx](http://www.santoantonioenergia.com.br/site/portal_mesa/en/home/home.aspx)



and explore the rest of the website content about part of the Madeira Hydroelectric Complex. They should then consider whether or not they support the project.

- Did the national government group's decision about support for the hydroelectric project match the principles of good governance?
- Did the community leaders group feel it could influence the decision to build the dams?
- Should they both follow their own ideas or represent the ideas of their community/voters? What if they disagree? How does this compare with leaders in our own country?

### Development

Students use storyboards to create an outline plan for a short animated film that explains one or more of the issues associated with some of the planned infrastructure projects (see Resource Sheet 4a). Challenge this by posting up the statements from Resource Sheet 4b around the room. Then have a class discussion on the question: 'Do projects such as the Madeira Hydroelectric Complex contribute to the sustainable development of the Amazon?'



### Action for the Amazon

Students should use their personal diagrams from Resource Sheet 1 and the web links below to explore how our lifestyles in the UK are linked to the Amazon. What are the consequences of consuming goods from far away – for example, the carbon footprint of transporting, processing, freezing or packaging food items, compared to items produced locally? How can we reduce our footprint? (see [www.oneplanetliving.org](http://www.oneplanetliving.org)).

Students could annotate their diagrams with ideas for action they could take at home and/or in school to help the Amazon. They could also suggest ways of convincing more people that by changing the way they live, they can help to protect the Amazon.

[Deforestation>cattle ranch>shoe shop>you](#)

[www.guardian.co.uk/environment/video/2009/may/31/brazil-amazon-deforestation](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/video/2009/may/31/brazil-amazon-deforestation)

[Deforestation>palm oil>crisps and toothpaste>you](#)

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front\\_page/newsid\\_8517000/8517093.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8517000/8517093.stm)

[www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/case\\_studies/palmoil\\_index.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/case_studies/palmoil_index.html)

[Deforestation>timber, soy, palm oil, beef, biofuels>you](#)

[www.forestdisclosure.com](http://www.forestdisclosure.com)

[Lifestyle>CO2>climate change>forest loss](#)

[www.wwf.org.uk/changehowyoulive](http://www.wwf.org.uk/changehowyoulive)

[www.panda.org/oneplanetliving](http://www.panda.org/oneplanetliving)

### Tomorrow's Amazon

Students create a piece of artwork that reflects their hopes for the Amazon. They should include a message about what needs to be done to achieve this vision – within their design or as a piece of written work.



All resource sheets and further information can be found online:  
[www.wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment](http://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment)

# Learn Question time



1. Imagine that you are floating down towards this forest by parachute. What can you see/hear/smell when you're high above the ground/close to the canopy/on the ground?
2. You land in the river and quickly scramble up onto the river bank. You're alone in a tropical rainforest. Where in the world could this be?
3. What sorts of plants and animals might you see?
4. You spotted a distant village when you were drifting down by parachute. You walk towards the village in search of help. What sort of people might be living in the rainforest? How might their daily lives compare with your own?
5. How will the rainforest affect your journey? Will you be able to move quickly/take a direct route/be sure you're travelling in the right direction? Will you be affected by the temperature/ insects/wildlife? Will you be able to find food and water?
6. You stop for a rest and think about the way the rainforest makes you feel. Is it quiet and still or noisy and full of movement? Is this a scary place or an enchanted world? What sort of things affect the way we feel about wild places?
7. You find a tree which has a criss-cross of grooves cut into the bark. A white liquid oozes from the bark into a small cup. What is the liquid/who might be collecting it? What products are made from it?
8. You follow a track towards a river. Vegetables are growing alongside the river and small boats are tied to the shore. Where were the boats made/what are they made from/what are they used for? Who owns the vegetables/will they be exported/sold in a shop/packaged/frozen?
9. You follow the track and enter a village. You approach one of the houses. Describe the family, their home and the village – how many people/generations live here. Who might have built the house/what materials were used/where did they come from? Do the family have electricity/access to schools or hospitals? Where do they get food/medicines/clothes/toys/water/information/news?
10. How are their lives different from ours? In what ways are they similar?
11. Does their lifestyle affect the ways in which we live our lives? In what ways does our lifestyle affect the ways they live?
12. What messages might these people have for people in countries like the UK? What messages might we have for them?
13. What do you think the quote on the poster means? Who are the poor and marginalised? What does well-being mean?

## Forest facts

- Tropical forests are found between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer – Latin America, West Africa, Madagascar, India, South East Asia and Australia.
- Tropical forests are hot (27°C), damp and wet with meandering rivers and trees stretching to the horizon.
- Tropical forests are home to 50% of the species on Earth. In the Amazon rainforest you will find trees such as the brazil-nut tree, kapok tree and animals such as the piracucu, black caiman, river dolphin, jaguar, tapir, boa, toucan and macaw. It is estimated that there are 70,000 species of insect per acre of the forest.
- The Amazon is also home to 30 million people, including 2.7 million indigenous people, ranchers, farmers, rubber tappers, fishermen, loggers and miners.
- The Amazon River is by far the world's largest river in terms of volume of water discharged into the sea. Its average discharge of approximately 219,000m<sup>3</sup>/s represents 15-16% of the world's total river discharge into the oceans.

## Poverty and the environment

Approximately 1.6 billion people around the world live in poverty. Many of them don't have proper shelter; don't have enough food; don't have clean, safe drinking water; can't see a doctor when they're sick; and can't afford to send their children to school. Being poor means living one day at a time; uncertain as to what tomorrow will bring; feeling powerless, and not having their voices heard by decision makers.

Nature provides a wealth of goods and services. Some 70% of the people living in poverty rely on natural resources for things like food, livelihoods, medicines, fuel and for the materials used to make their homes and household goods. So a healthy, functioning environment is fundamental not only to the planet's well-being but also to the well-being of the poor. It is the world's poorest people who suffer most when natural resources such as forests and rivers are degraded.

It's all too easy to perceive 'poor people' as the main threat to places such as the rainforest: after all, aren't they the ones who hunt the wildlife, slash and burn the forests for farmland, and cut down trees for fuelwood? But the true picture is rather different. The large-scale degradation of the natural environment is often driven by wealth rather than poverty; by the high demand that people living in Europe and North America place on natural resources.

Organisations such as WWF approach the problem from two angles. We try to influence consumers, big business and governments to address the way we all use natural resources. And we work with poorer people to improve the way they manage their natural resources. A key challenge is to avoid the trap where conservation of the natural world leads to the continuation of poverty.

### Emerald forest

The Amazon rainforest is home to 30 million people, 10% of the world's known species and 40% of the world's remaining tropical forest. The survival of this rainforest is key to the survival of the people and species that live there. It is also enormously significant in our efforts to combat climate change.

About 20% of the Amazon forest has already been lost. The forest is threatened by cattle ranching and agriculture, logging, mining and developments such as the Madeira Hydroelectric Dam – one of the largest infrastructure project in Latin America.

### The road towards sustainable development?

In 2000, the national governments of 12 Latin American countries joined forces with a number of banks to create the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA). The initiative has plans for 50 infrastructure schemes in the Amazon – ports, roads, airports, hydroelectric power plants and navigation schemes for rivers – which they hope will bring prosperity and more 'modern' developments to more people in the area.

One of the main problems associated with infrastructure developments is the unplanned and unforeseen changes that can follow in their wake. Intact forests are usually impenetrable places which protect themselves from 'development'. But roads enable loggers to access a forest. When a river is made more easily navigable, the land alongside it becomes attractive to farmers who can clear the forests, plant crops and use riverboats to transport their crops to markets and seaports.

The ships that leave these seaports carry the bounty of the Amazon to people like us – things like timber, rubber, palm oil, soy, beef and leather. Some of these goods are produced in a way that does little damage to the natural environment; others are produced after the natural environment has been destroyed. Some of these goods provide an income for the people of the Amazon; most add to the wealth of individuals and companies in a region where inequality – the gap between the richest and poorest – is the greatest in the world.

WWF is working with communities, businesses, consumers and policy makers to try and influence development activities to make them as sustainable as possible, safeguarding the natural world whilst also delivering long-term poverty reduction.



**NEXT ISSUE!**

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