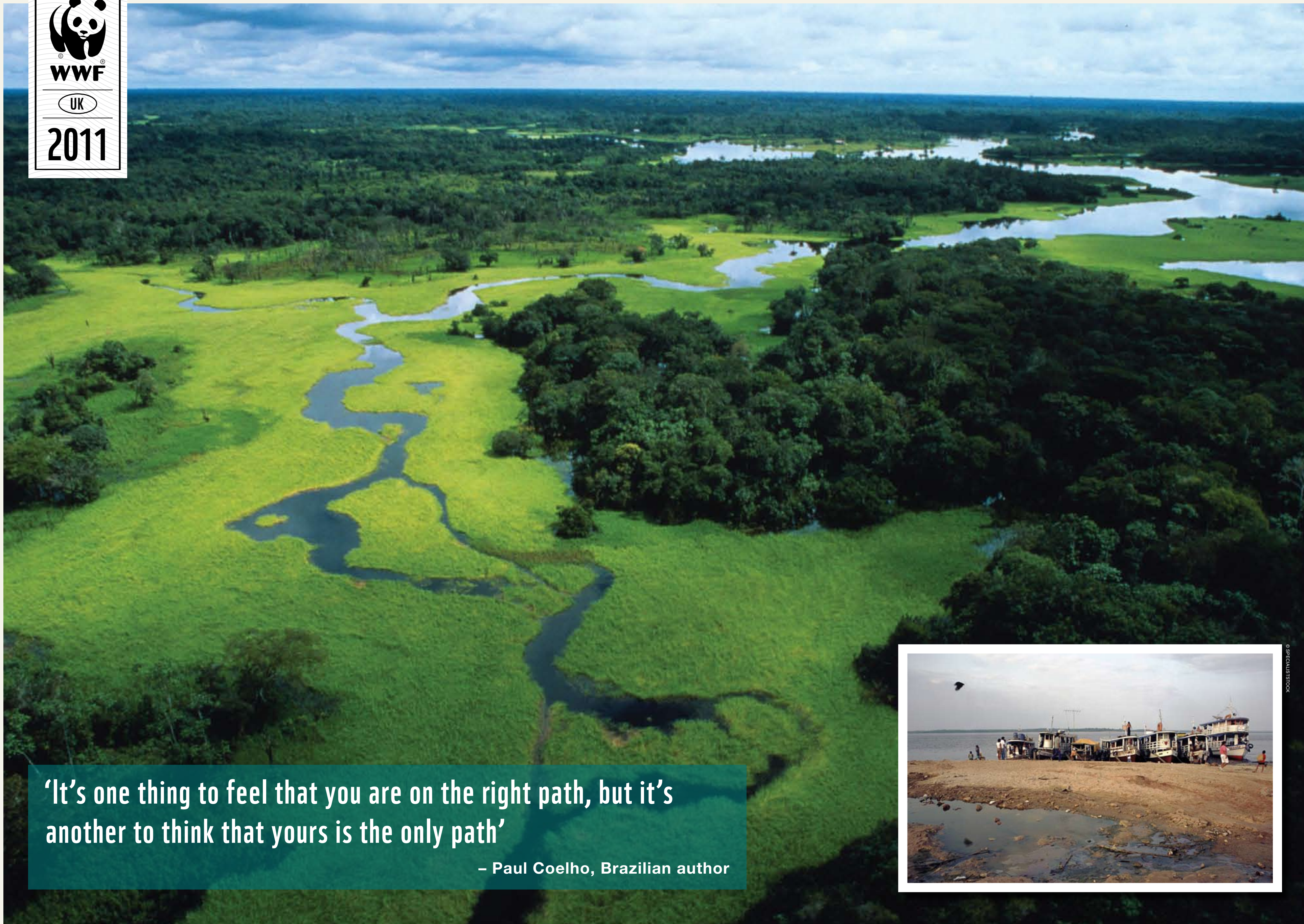




WWF

UK

2011



**‘It’s one thing to feel that you are on the right path, but it’s another to think that yours is the only path’**

**– Paul Coelho, Brazilian author**



# LEARN IN FOCUS

## The droughts that hit the Amazon in 2005 and 2010 were so severe that food parcels had to be flown into the region.

Rivers dried up, millions of fish died and forest fires raged over wide areas. The people of Latin America know all about the power of nature as a force for change. El Niño and La Niña cause extreme changes in the weather every 5 years and the annual hurricane season in Central America brings devastating winds, floods and mudslides.

In recent years, Latin America has seen rapid development in many parts of the region. Much of this change has been driven by an increasing world demand for products like soy and palm oil. Soy is used to make animal feed and palm oil is used in about half of the packaged goods found in our supermarkets. Vast areas of land have been converted to grow these crops or graze cattle. Forests and savannahs have been cleared; roads and canals have been built to bring the produce to the ports; and rivers have been dammed to provide hydroelectricity for the cities and factories. Latin America has been using its supply of land to produce and sell goods like timber, orange juice, rubber and coffee to people all over the world. But Latin America doesn't have a limitless supply of land.

Moreover, the land that is now being used for farming once supported indigenous forest peoples, offered a sustainable living for rubber tappers, and was the home of species such as the jaguar and hyacinth macaw. But this land had an importance regional and globally. Not only did they play a vital role in weather patterns, soil and water systems but they also played a major part in halting the advance of climate change.

Climate change has the potential to impact us all, affecting weather and the way we live throughout the world. Scientists are exploring the idea that some parts of the world are already experiencing these extremes in weather. In the long term we need to recognise the crucial role the remaining Amazon rainforests and savannahs play in our interconnected natural global system. Surely this is more important than the short term gains that farming and timber provide us with?



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### Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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

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1. François de la Rochefoucauld, François de la Rochefoucauld, French author and moralist, 1613-1680

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One Planet Schools®

## WELCOME TO LEARN

In 2005, the Amazon basin suffered an extreme drought. Rivers ran dry, trees and wildlife died and the rainforest began to release billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.



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Instead of helping to combat climate change by absorbing greenhouse gases, the rainforest was helping to feed it. The drought that affected the region in 2010 was even worse. Two extreme droughts in the space of five years!

Droughts and floods are natural events and change is one of the dominant features of the natural world. Elements that are essential to life – things like water, oxygen, carbon and soil – are all part of a cycle of change. The climate, the landscape and even the rocks beneath our feet are all subject to the forces of change. But change isn't always natural; it can be driven or speeded up by human activity. Scientists are trying to work out if these droughts were a consequence of human-induced climate change - a sign of things to come – or simply part of the natural cycle.

The activities on this poster explore climate change by looking at the impact of human activity in Latin America and the UK. WWF is working with governments, businesses and communities to tackle climate change. International agreements, cleaner power, energy efficiency, protection of forests and changing the way we live can all help to combat climate change.

The poster is supported by a set of online activities and is the third in a set of three resources focusing on Latin America. Poster 1 looked at the relationship between people and the rainforest, and the impacts on both of the Maderia River hydroelectric project. Poster 2 explored the impact of economic development on the people of the region.

## INFORMATION

Visit our website for weblinks, further activities, links to other resources and background information – [wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment](http://wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment)



This material has been funded by UKaid from the Department for International Development.

WWF.ORG.UK/LEARN

# LEARN IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Visit our website for weblinks, further activities, links to other resources and background information – [wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment](http://wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment)

## Change since 1961

WWF was created in 1961 when the population of the world stood at 3 billion people; today it's grown to 7 billion. This growth in population numbers and the increased consumption in countries like Europe and North America have put massive pressure on the resources of the planet.

Use Activity Sheet 1 and the website links on [wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment](http://wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment) to draw a timeline showing the major environmental changes since 1961.

**Discussion:** Which of these changes are positive/negative? Have organisations like WWF made a difference/can they make a difference in the future?

## All about climate change

Research the website links on [wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment](http://wwf.org.uk/learn/povertyandenvironment) and create a storyboard for a short film that explains the causes and/or describes the results of climate change. Include an explanation of the role of rainforests in combating climate change.

## Global footprint

If everyone lived like the average person in Europe we'd need 3 planets to provide us with the things we need to survive – food, water, energy, shelter and somewhere to put our waste. People in developing countries don't enjoy the same sort of lifestyle and don't put the planet's resources under so much pressure. Developing countries need to take a bigger share of the world's resources in order to lift people out of poverty. This can only happen if we reduce the share that we take because there's not enough to go around.

**Discussion:** Do you agree with this analysis? Are you willing to take a smaller share of the world's resources? Do you think that other people in countries like the UK would be willing to cut their consumption of things like food, clothes, technology and energy?

Use our footprint calculator to find out about your footprint:

[footprint.wwf.org.uk](http://footprint.wwf.org.uk)

## Food labelling

What happens when we buy things from Latin America? Draw and/or make food packaging and labels that tell the buyer about the environmental and social costs of some of the goods that we buy.

**Discussion:** Should we stop buying goods from Latin America? How will this affect the people of that region? How can we buy things that don't cost the Earth?

## Chocó-Darién and palm oil

Make a mask of cotton-top tamarin; wear the mask and tell people how their palm oil is destroying your habitat and the planet's climate.

**Discussion:** Soy is mainly used as a feed for livestock. If we reduce the amount of meat we eat, we can help to save places like the Cerrado and the Amazon by reducing the need to grow more and more soy. Create a piece of persuasive writing to convince people to support your view on this issue. Your writing must include at least one recipe or menu that will support your thoughts about eating meat and saving places like the Cerrado.

## One Planet Living

Research the following website and create a One Planet Living Plan for your home and/or school:

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

## Paths are made by walking

The quote on the poster refers to finding the 'right path'. Think about the things that people, governments and businesses need to do to move us in the right direction along the path to combat climate change. Create a set of first step pledges and encourage others to join you.

# LEARN QUESTION TIME

## Question 1

Every year, 250,000 square kilometres of the Amazon are flooded. Flooding is part of a natural cycle that brings life to the soils, plants and animals of the region. What would it be like to journey through this flooded forest?

## Question 2

Describe the smaller picture. What do you think these people are thinking? How do you think they feel?

## Question 3

Nature has many creative powers. Places like the Iguazu waterfalls and species like giant anteater are often referred to as wonders of nature. Describe a time when you saw one of nature's wonders. How did it make you feel?

## Question 4

Many places in Latin America are more vulnerable to the destructive powers of nature. The hurricane season in Central America and the Caribbean lasts from May until November and storms can bring death and destruction. Drought, floods and earthquakes are more common in Latin America than they are in the UK. How do you think your beliefs, values, attitudes and/or lifestyle would be different if your life was more closely affected by the powers of nature?

## Question 5

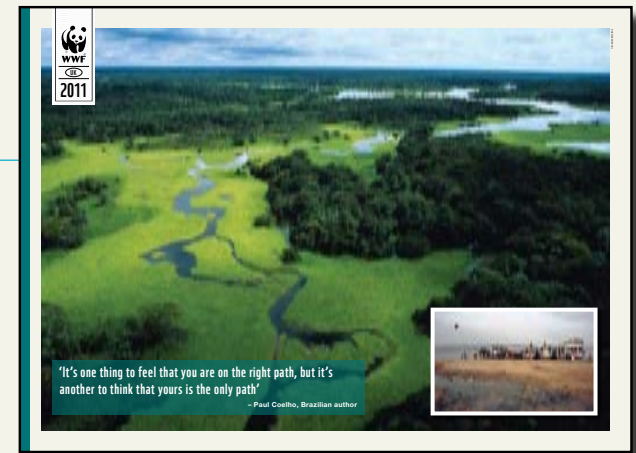
Scientists predict that climate change will cause extreme weather events on a more regular basis – winds will be more destructive; longer droughts and deeper floods. Who do you think will suffer most from these extreme weather events: rich people in their houses or poor people in the Favelas; farmer workers in Latin America or shoppers in the UK?

## Question 6

Do you think that people in developed countries would be more concerned about climate change if they felt more closely linked to nature or were affected more often by things like storms and droughts? How could people be helped to feel closer to nature?

## Question 7

How is deforestation and farming in Latin America linked to food and fashion in the UK and to climate change all around the planet? What do people need to know about climate change?



## Question 8

Who is most responsible for climate change: the people in Latin America who clear the land to grow soy or the people in countries like the UK who buy shoes and meat from animals that have been fed on soy?

## Question 9

The demand for products like soy and palm oil is increasing because people in countries like India and China are becoming wealthier and able to buy more and more products that rely on soy and palm oil. People in Europe are also consuming more and more of these products. Should people in developed countries consume less so that people in developing countries can consume more?

## Question 10

What do people need to do in order to stop climate change? What message would you send to people in Latin America? What message would you give to people in the UK?

## Question 11

Look at the quote on the poster: What do you think this means? People, such as those in government and industry, who are promoting trade and export, say that trade and development have helped to lift millions of people out of poverty in Latin America, India and China. Doesn't this mean that we're on the right path? Is there another path that will bring people out of poverty without destroying the planet that sustains us? What would that path look like?