

Comprehension 2

The Amazon is the world's largest tropical rainforest. It covers an area of nearly 2.8 million square miles, which is nearly the size of the continent of Australia. The vast forest consists of various different layers, each featuring its own specially adapted plants and animals.

The forest floor is the lowest region. Since only two percent of the sunlight from above reaches this level, very few plants grow here. The forest floor, however, is rich with rotting vegetation and the bodies of dead organisms, which are quickly broken down into nutrients integrated into the soil. Tree roots stay close to these available nutrients and animals such as millipedes and earthworms use these nutrients for food.

The understory is the layer above the forest floor. Much like the forest floor, only about 2- 5 percent of the sunlight reaches this shadowy area. Many of the plants in the understory have large, broad leaves to collect as much sunlight as possible.

The layer above the understory is the canopy. Leaves in the canopy are very dense and filter about 80 percent of the sunlight. The canopy is where the wealth of the rainforest's fruits and flowers grow. Cup-like plants provide drinking pools for animals and breeding locations for tree frogs.

The emergent layer is above the canopy, and is the top layer of the rainforest. Trees in the emergent layer break through the canopy and may reach heights of 200 feet and their trunks can be up to 16 feet in circumference. Leaves in the emergent layer are small and covered with a special wax to hold water. Many animals that survive in the emergent layer never touch the ground.

Read the following article and answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. Find a word in paragraph 1 which means the same as ‘modified’.

2. What does “its” in line 3 refer to?

3. What are the layers that make up the Amazon rainforest?

4. According to paragraph 2, what 2 purposes do the nutrients in the soil have?

5. Which layer is the most suitable for plant growth?

6. How do you think many animals in the emergent layer live without ever touching the ground?

PEAK COURSES

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