



by



Deforestation



Deforestation is the cutting, clearing, and removal of rainforest or related ecosystems into pasture, cropland, or plantations. There are many contributors to deforestation. Logging, mining, cattle ranching, agriculture, and oil or gas extraction are the main reasons for forests to be cut down. Mostly it is done to earn someone money, and at

the rate it is occurring it could destroy our planet as we know it.

Tropical rainforests are in the most danger from deforestation. Even though rainforests only make up 6-7% of Earth's surface, they contain more than half of all the plant and animal species in the world. That means the impact of deforestation on them is deeper than any other place on Earth. Thirty percent of Earth's rainforests are located in Brazil. Other locations include the Congo River Basin in central Africa, Southeast Asia, New Guinea, and Madagascar.

Brazil also has the highest rate of deforestation. Brazil has lost 90-95% of the forest on its Atlantic coast to cattle ranches and soybean fields, and Madagascar has lost 95% of its overall forests. The trees are used for paper products, furniture, and wood products. You may find it pretty amazing, but even knowing what deforestation is doing to the planet, companies continue to cut rainforests down at a rate of 149 acres or more per minute. According to Monga Bay's website, "if the current rate of deforestation continues, the world's rain forests will vanish within 100 years- causing unknown effects on global climate and eliminating the majority of plant and animal species on the planet."

Rainforests of the World in Order of Size

Brazil 30%
Congo River Basin 20%
Southeast Asia 10%
New Guinea 7%
Madagascar 5%
Other countries 28%

The consequences of deforestation are devastating not only to the trees. Many animals, insects, other plants, and even peoples are becoming extinct or endangered due to lack of food and habitat. The Javan rhinoceros, the mountain

gorilla, the Bornean orangutan, and the giant panda are just a few of the animals being starved or pushed from their homes by deforestation.



Another result of rainforest loss is soil erosion. The roots of trees help hold soil in place. When those trees are removed, rain water washes the nutrients in the soil away, making the land barren-or unable to grow replacement plants.

Deforestation also causes climate change. Trees and plants are what filter our air and make it possible for us to breathe by taking in carbon dioxide and putting out oxygen. The fewer trees on the planet, the less filtering taking place. This contributes to a rising overall temperature which alters habitats by decreasing the availability of food and water. It also poses the danger of melting ice caps in the Arctic, allowing ocean levels to rise.

We may not be able to stop large corporations from destroying rainforests, but we can help by lessening the need for products made from these areas. Always using both sides of a piece of paper for schoolwork or play helps cut down on the amount of paper you use. Recycling and buying recycled products is another way to reduce. Using your pencils until they are stubs will help reduce the need for wood to make them. Eat more fish, fruits, and vegetables to cut down on the need for cattle grazing. Read newspapers and magazines online. You can also write your congressman and the heads of companies known to cut down rainforests and let them know you disapprove of deforestation.



Can you imagine what it would be like for half the plants and animals on Earth to be suddenly gone? If we are not very careful, that will happen within the next century.

Study Questions

Circle the correct answer

1. What percent of the earth is covered in rainforest?

- a. 10-15% b. 25-50% c. 6-7%

2. What percentage of the world's plants and animals live in rainforests?

- a. 50% b. 30% c. 75%

3. Which of these countries has rainforest in it?

- a. United States b. Brazil c. Russia

4. Circle all the causes of deforestation:

- a. logging b. mining c. fishing

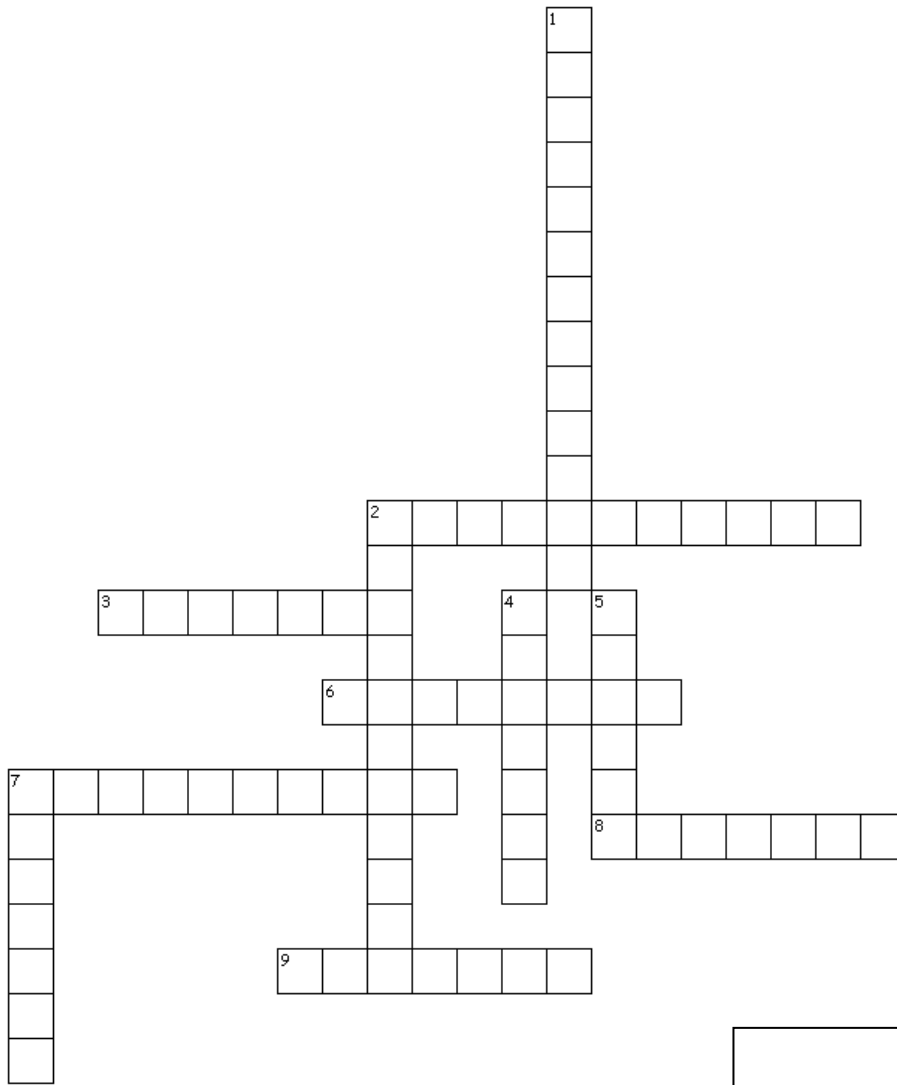
5. Name the largest rainforests of the world in order of size:

6. True False:

- _____ Soil erosion is one result of deforestation.
_____ The mountain gorilla is not facing extinction due to deforestation.
_____ All of the world's rainforests could disappear within 100 years.
_____ Climate change has nothing to do with deforestation.
_____ 70% of the world's rainforests are found in Brazil.

7. List some things you can do to help cut down deforestation:

Deforestation Crossword



Across

- 2. a large company
- 3. removal of soil by wind and rain
- 6. climate on or near the equator
- 7. habitat where 50% of plants and animals live
- 8. cutting down trees to make wood products
- 9. 100 years

Down

- 1. cutting down trees to make way for pastures and crops
- 2. government representative
- 4. average temperature in an eco-region
- 5. country where 30% of Earth's rainforests are
- 7. use again; convert to a reusable material

Word Bank

- erosion rainforest tropical
- deforestation Brazil recycle
- logging climate corporation
- congressman century

Deforestation Word Search

D L O C E S X B S Z E C C L G
T E A D L H D D I L C O S N Y
D J F C Q I L G C K N R L O N
W P W O I B M Y Q G Q P G I Z
R F K P R P C A R V X O C A T
K E I A N E O E T K Z R E F N
R F Z F R J S R U E H A N X S
P I L E F S K T T L B T T D I
L W O S M V C Y A J N I U N B
F O J A T S K W M T O O R F A
R A N L O G G I N G I N Y Z Y
T S E R O F N I A R S O M B I
O C F G D R S J A J O Y N H X
C T V N U K X M N L R J P D B
F Z E O F Z V C H U E J U U W

BRAZIL
CONGRESSMAN
EROSION
RECYCLE

CENTURY
CORPORATION
LOGGING
TROPICAL

CLIMATE
DEFORESTATION
RAINFOREST