

# Rainforests - Preview Lesson

Interactive and Creative Learning Using Drama Technique

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A series of lessons – Rainforest Soundscapes, evolution game, rainforest story, written work development, life cycle of the rainforest, Food chains, Puppet show, Human Activity in the Forest

Stage P4/7 (Age 8-11)

### **Sound Effect Suggestions You Might Want To Use.**

Deep In The Jungle - (Dr Sound Effects) 210 Nature Sounds - 20 hours of relaxing natural ambiances for meditation and sleep

This is a great free music/sound effects website we'd recommend.

<https://www.freesfx.co.uk/>

It has lots of music and sound effects. If you're preview listening it does take a while to load the tracks. Here is another:

<http://soundbible.com/suggest.php?q=rainforest&x=13&y=11>

### **Introduction**

Before starting the lessons the teacher might want to discuss a few rainforest facts with the students.

1. Where in the world are the rainforests?
2. What plants grow there?
3. What animals live there?
4. What people live there?

<https://kids.mongabay.com/elementary/002.html>

## Lesson 1

### Activity 1 – Rainforest Soundscape

**I can create, adapt and sustain different roles, experimenting with movement, expression and voice and using theatre arts technology.**

**EXA 2-12a**

You can easily do these lessons in the classroom.

In preparation for this lesson the children need to know some basic facts about the rainforest – vegetation, animals, climate etc (see questions above).

### **Visualisation and Sensory Exercise**

The teacher can ask the children to imagine what it would feel like standing in the middle of a rainforest.

Ask them to close their eyes and **visualise the scene**.

The teacher suggests to them it's very warm but the air seems wet, moist and there are lots of **smells** in the air.

Ask them think about what they would **hear**.

Tell them that you are going to make the sounds of the rainforest together and that in each of 4 groups they will be given a sound part.

If the children are sitting at tables then this is a great way to organize them into 4 groups.

**You can do this group activity as a whole class first of all and then in the various groups.**

The sounds can be made purely with hands, bodies, tapping on tables, vocal etc or you can introduce scrunched up paper, pencil tapping, card flapping if the class are able to focus using these props.

#### Group 1

Forest Floor -This group will make the sounds of the low level, dark rainforest, the rustles of decaying bushes, the insects and creatures that live there– frogs and toads, beetles, ant eaters, alligators- get a few ideas on this and the whole class can help to focus this group on making sounds for this area.

#### Group 2

Understory Layer with large leafed plants searching for light. Larger animals (jaguars and leopards) animals that climb – tree frogs and scramble in the Buzzing insects and butterflies. Again talk this through with the children.

### Group 3

Canopy Layer- roof of the rainforest with lots of food for the animals (parrots, toucans, macaws) of the rainforest, more vocal sounds, wings flapping, trees rustling. Spider monkeys, sloths, snakes

### Group 4

Emergent layer and the rain itself- Eagles, bats, Rubbing hands together is good for rain starting up then tapping fingers in a rhythm on the tables and then hands when the rain becomes louder.

When the 4 groups have been briefed hear each one in turn and just tweak the sounds where necessary.

Now ask all the groups to start their own sounds **very quietly**. You want to be able to hear every sound if possible so no one is too noisy.

The teacher now tells them he/she will be like a rainforest orchestra conductor and will give the groups a hand signal or gesture for a group to stop their sounds and the signal to start them up again.

Also give them a signal to make their sounds louder. Go through these signals with them.

Now you are ready to make the soundscape with the teacher conducting. Begin with perhaps Group 1, then add in Group 2, then it starts to rain add in Group 4 and so on.

You can stop a group at any time to focus in on the others.

They will enjoy this and you can choose children in turns to come and be the conductor of the soundscape.

**You could record this activity so that they can all listen to see if it has been effective.**

**Evolution Game** - You can also play a version of The Evolution Game as part of a rainforest lesson.

It's the rock paper scissors game that you adapt to progress through the layers - aiming to get to bird status.

You can decide on your own progression such as-  
Bugs / Trees / Monkeys / Birds

**Assess with the children if these exercises have helped them to imagine and experience the rainforest.**

## **Activity 2**

This soundscape can now be developed into a **rainforest description/story**.

**The teacher tells the class that he/she will speak about the rainforest and in their groups they will make the sounds that match the story.**

They will have to listen very carefully so that they know whose group would make a particular sound.

### **Story Example**

The huge anaconda snake slipped out of a slushy swamp and through some foliage looking for breakfast (Group 1 will take this up)

A rustle by a bush –a tasty snack perhaps a mouse or bird. (Group 1)

A family of monkeys above heard the noises and began to chatter swinging on creaking tree branches (Group 3)

Up above the canopy soft morning rain began to drizzle on the leaves. (Group 4) The rain became heavier. (Group 4)

A macaw squawked and flapped its very wet feathers and flew to take cover. Insects buzzed noisily and butterflies flapped (Group 2/3)

The pad, pad of heavy footsteps could be heard as a jaguar prowled through some bushes (Group 3).

As the rain became heavier the monkeys swung away to take cover. (Group 3 and 4)

The jaguar scratched a long claw on a nearby tree and the macaw flapped off into the trees. (Group 2 and 3)

**Now you can ask the children if anyone else would like to try a story. Explain it can be very simple just three or four sentences.**

Some classes will manage this no problem and be very creative with it, others might struggle and you can be ready to help them out.

Assess with the children how they have found this activity, what they have learned and if it has helped their confidence.

### **Development Into Written Work**

This exercise can be further developed into written work either individually, in pairs or in groups (an advanced option requiring more intense collaboration).

As individuals/pairs they would write their own few lines and the class perform the sounds to accompany them.

As a group activity they could do the written piece and **the sound presentation** just within the one group.

The others can watch each group and give feedback.

**Below is a summary of what is contained in the rest of the Rainforest package lessons.\***

## **Lesson 2**

### **Living things interacting in the rainforest.**

Rainforest – biodiversity, food chains, growing, interdependence.

The life of the rainforest.

Movement and mime as the children become the plants of the forest, working in groups to represent the rainforest life forms and their interactions. Rain forest food chain.

Use of music to bring this to life.

## **Lesson 3**

### **Puppet Show – A Day In The Rainforest.**

Working together to create very simple puppet shows, use of narration, word banks, adding in percussion. This is great fun for the students and they could even do it as a shadow screen presentation- all you need is a large white sheet and a couple of torches.

## **Lesson 4**

### **Human Activity In The Rainforest – Logging Farming, building etc**

**Improvisation, discussion, presenting points of view, story telling, reporting, interviews (link to ideas for Assembly piece), Written work, hot seating.**

Looking at human activity in the rain forest, what jobs are done and what is the effect on the forest? – Is it good or bad?

The effect animals of the rainforest and what would they say about human activity.

## **Lesson 5**

### **Logger V's Rainforest Resident - Hot Seating Exercises, Discussion and Debate, Rainforest Raps**

The future of the rainforest – setting some rules and listing them after debating the issues.

To get the full set of lessons click on the link below.

<https://www.thedramastudio.com/store/product/298-rainforests-1>