

# LEARN AT CHESTER ZOO

## WHY I BELIEVE THE RAINFOREST IS IMPORTANT

Print and cut out these rainforest facts (on card or paper).

The rainforest trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, slowing climate change.

The Amazon has about one fifth of the world's fresh water in its rivers; it is the largest river system on Earth.

The Amazon Rainforest is thought to control climate across the world.

Deforestation has caused many plant and animal species to become extinct. Unless it is stopped many more species will become extinct in the future

The Amazon is warm and wet and very dense (thick with plant and animal life).

In the last 10 years, most crops have been planted on previously cleared land. Indonesia has lost too much land to the growth of oil palm. (Palm oil production is predicted to greatly increase in the Amazon countries so we should learn from what has happened in Indonesia).

The Amazon Rainforest is often called 'the lungs of the Earth' because the trees release so much oxygen into the air, needed for life across the world.

The trees produce water; it falls as rain in South America and as far away as Africa.

With deforestation, less water will fall as rain, increasing droughts.

Many medicines come from the Amazon Rainforest.

Trees have been cut down to create space for growing crops such as rice, oil palms, coffee, tea, soybeans, citrus fruits, cacao, rubber and bananas. These products are distributed across the world.

The Amazon Rainforest provides jobs for local people e.g. in farming, felling of trees and in tourism.

The Amazon provides habitats for millions of plants and animals. It is home to about one quarter of all animal and plant life on Earth and 1 in 10 of plant and animal species.

Tree roots stop soil being washed into rivers, blocking them. This prevents flooding.

The Amazon river is the second longest river in the world – 6840 km long! (The River Nile is the longest)

The Amazon is the largest tropical rainforest in the world – over 5 1/2 million km<sup>2</sup>.

About 400-500 indigenous tribes live in the rainforest. (50 are thought to have never met other people).

The floor of the Amazon is very dark because of the thick canopy. It takes about 10 minutes for rainwater to reach the ground.

The Amazon has many amazing creatures such as jaguars, piranhas, poison dart frogs, venomous snakes, and alligators.