



RAINFOREST
TRUST®

Debating the Rainforest

Levels: Ages 11 - 14



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Standards

- Common Core Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics
- Next Generation Science Standards for MS Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: MS Human Impacts

Concepts

- Learning Outcomes: Students will learn about and consider different opinions to deforestation. Through role playing and debate students will formulate their own opinion for how rainforest should be managed.

- What are the different ways rainforests are valued? Which of these values is most important?
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Part I: Rules

1. Each group must make a persuasive argument for, or against developing or conserving the Amazon rainforests.
2. Regardless of how they personally feel, each person needs to take on their role.
3. After constructing their argument each student/group has up to five or ten minutes to persuasively put forward your case.
4. No interrupting or talking over others, one voice at a time. Everyone must have a chance to argue their role as persuasively as possible.
5. The teacher may serve as moderator.

Part II: Options

1. To clear an area of rainforest for a cattle ranch and meat processing factory.
2. To designate an area of the forest as a national park and develop tourism, restaurants and information centers among the remaining areas of forest.
3. To fence off an area for local people to continue their traditional lifestyle, allowing only small scale harvesting of plants for scientific research use in new medicines.

Part III: Roles

Brazilian government politicians

- The Brazilian government has \$17.43 billion of loans and needs to improve the finances of the country to lower the debt.
- Brazil has a population of 200 million people
- 0.4% of the population is indigenous tribes people
- 15% of young adults (16 – 24) are unemployed

Spokesperson for indigenous tribes

- It is estimated that less than 200,000 indigenous people live in the Amazon rainforest, in 2000 there were 940,000 indigenous tribes people in the rainforest.
- A forest dwelling tribe is lost in Brazil every single year

Brazilian residents from Rio de Janeiro

- Only 67% of people aged 15-64 have a paid job
- 22% of residents in Rio De Janeiro live in favelas (substandard and irregular housing communities)

- People living in favelas are often unemployed or have low incomes. The average monthly income for people living in favelas is US \$240.

Professor from the School of Tropical Medicine

- As the rainforest disappears, so do many potentially valuable drugs. Currently 25% of Western pharmaceuticals are derived from rainforest materials, but only 1% of these materials have been tested.
- Currently, over 120 drugs come from plant-derived sources. Of the 3000 plants identified by the US National Cancer Institute as active against cancer cells, 70% come from rainforests
- Indigenous tribes are severely affected by diseases such as small pox and measles, which they have not come into contact with before.

Head of a global meat processing company

- Your company sells animal meat to more than 150 countries
- You are investigating low carbon cattle ranches and have 10 farms in the Amazon which are part of this project.
- Your company made a profit of £160 million last year.

Tour Operator from Tucan Travel

- Your company currently runs adventure holidays to the rainforest in Costa Rica and would like to expand to Brazil
- Package holidays to the rainforest cost from £900 per person
- In the hotels and for the rainforest activities you employ people from the local area.
Campaigner from Greenpeace
- More than 20% of the world's oxygen is produced in the Amazon Rainforest. This has earned the area the name The Lungs of The Planet.
- The Amazon Basin holds one-fifth of the world's fresh water.
- More than half the world's approximately 10 million species of plants, animals and insects live in the tropical rainforests.

Part IV: Debating the Rainforest

Preparing your speech – follow these steps and you can use the sentence starters below. Use some of the facts we have learnt about above, do your own research and use persuasive techniques to convince the others to vote for your idea.

1. Introduce yourself and who you represent
2. Give reasons for your opinion.
3. Why your option is better than the others e.g. Hello, I am Claude and I am the head of JBS meat processing company... This is the best option because... In addition this would also benefit

Because... If you do not develop the rainforest in this way ... This is the best option as... The problems with the other options would be

Part V: Solutions

1. Following the debate, the entire group needs to vote which way to go from the options given in Part II.
2. Ask each student/group to share if they are for, or against the development or conservation of the Amazon? Why?
3. Is there any wiggle room in the middle between these choices? Have students discuss what that wiggle room might look like in the multiple choices and stakeholders invested in rainforests.
4. Finally, together as a class debrief your debate. What did students learn from this activity?