

## RainForest Scavenger Hunt Answers: Grades 7-8

1. It is important to conserve rainforests because the plants in rainforests provide oxygen for the whole world. If rainforests continue to be destroyed, there will be fewer trees to absorb carbon dioxide and turn it into the oxygen we need to breathe. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming and climate change. So more carbon dioxide and less oxygen will mean that climate change will worsen and our planet will become less able to sustain life.
2. Frogs are amphibians. Snakes, crocodiles, lizards, geckos, tortoises, and turtles are all reptiles.
3. Reptiles and amphibians thrive in hotter environments because they need the heat to warm themselves. Reptiles and amphibians that live in cooler environments typically need to hibernate for weeks or months because without body heat they do not have much energy. Many of the reptiles and amphibians you see are probably basking underneath their heat lamps. They soak up the warmth under their lamps to get warm.
4. Invertebrates that eat leaf litter are helping to fertilize the plants around them. The waste of these invertebrates is full of rich nutrients that plants absorb which helps plants grow. Without these invertebrates, the ground would be covered in dead leaves and the soil would be smothered.
5. Because turtles have only a few offspring late in their lives, turtles are very prone to population loss. When there are more turtles being hunted or killed than there are turtles being born, the populations will continue to decrease. Zoos and conservation organizations can help turtles by instituting breeding programs to increase the population numbers, conduct research to understand and address the threats facing turtles, and to promote conservation in the environments in which the turtles live.
6. Rainforests are the ecosystems with the most biodiversity (home to a wide-range of species). Destroying these environments will lead to the extinction of thousands of species. Rainforests also serve as climate controllers; rainforests impact the climate of the whole planet. Without them, our weather would be much different. Rainforests are also some of the largest fresh water systems on the planet. Fresh water is needed for any organism to survive.
8. Be a smart shopper. If you are looking for a pet, research the store or seller you are considering purchasing from. Ask where the seller sources its animals. Are they captive-bred, or are they taken from the wild? Research the pet you are interested in; wild animals do not make good pets. Domesticated animals make the best pets, as they are tame and friendly. Remember that some animals are illegal to own. Also, do not promote wild pets by “liking” or sharing videos of wild pets online.
9. Plants have many defense mechanisms. Some plants are toxic; they contain toxins that will hurt or kill animals that eat them. Some plants have thorns or bristles, which protects them from hungry herbivores. Other plants are covered in thick bark or skin that many animals can’t break through.
10. Population fragmentation is a problem because groups of orangutans are cut off from one another and cannot mate. Small groups of orangutans that continue to mate with each other will lead to inbreeding. Inbreeding is dangerous because poor genes can continue to be passed on. Too much inbreeding often reduces a population’s ability to survive long-term.