

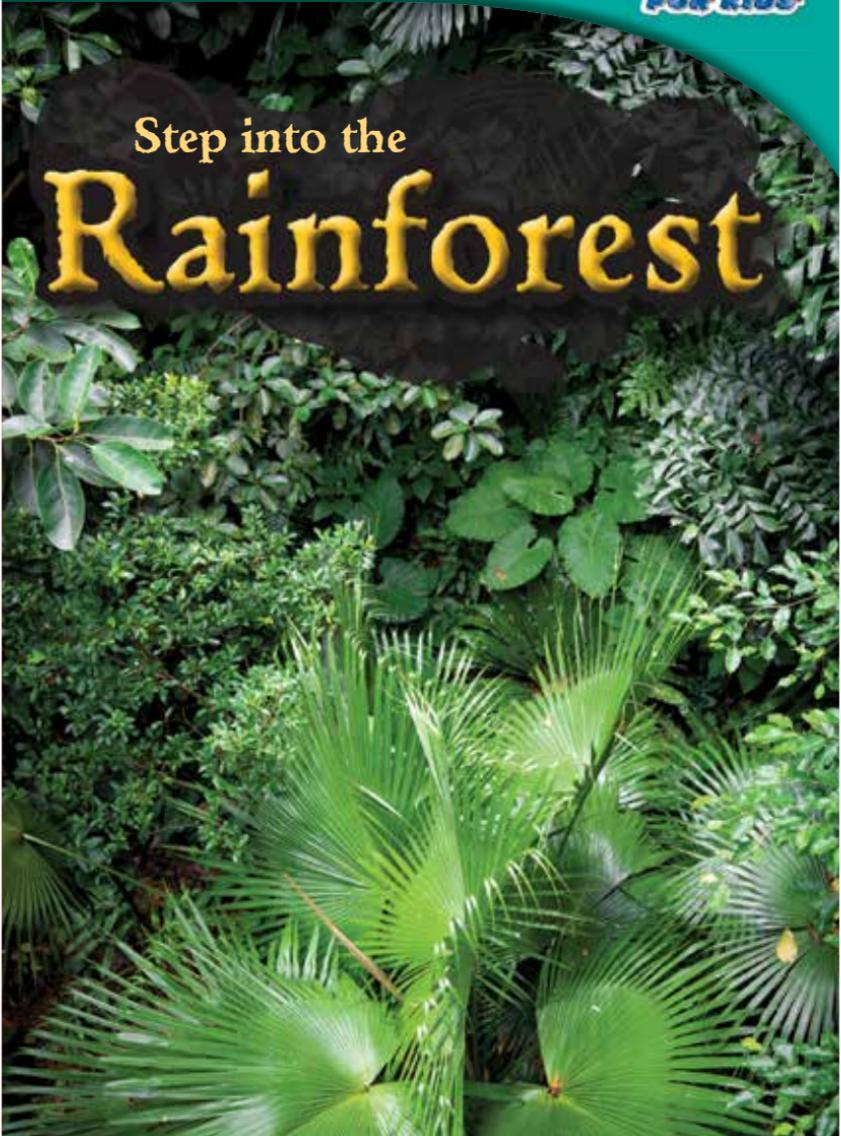
Step into the

Rainforest

Howard Rice

TIME
FOR KIDS

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Rainforest



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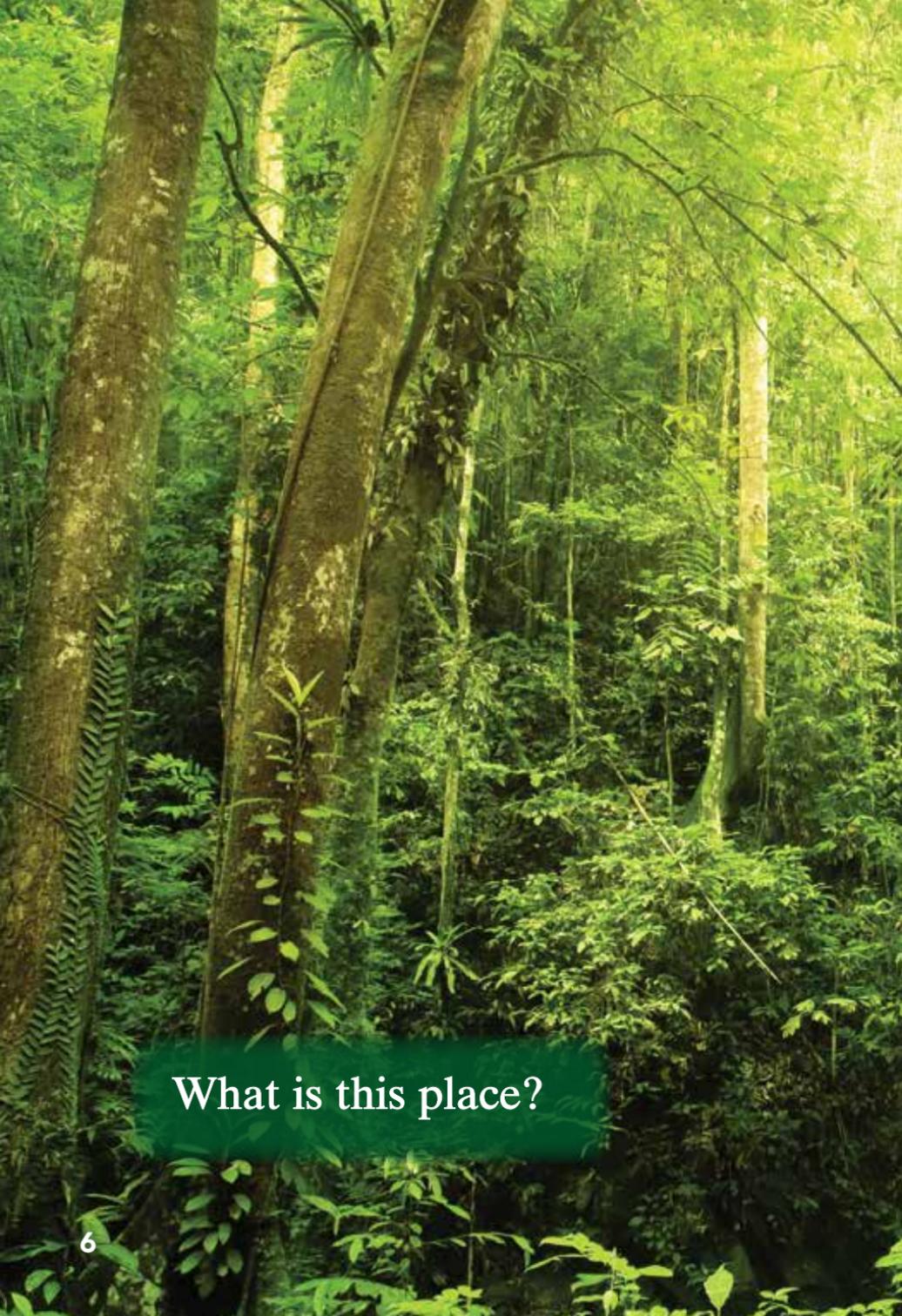
A Warm, Wet World



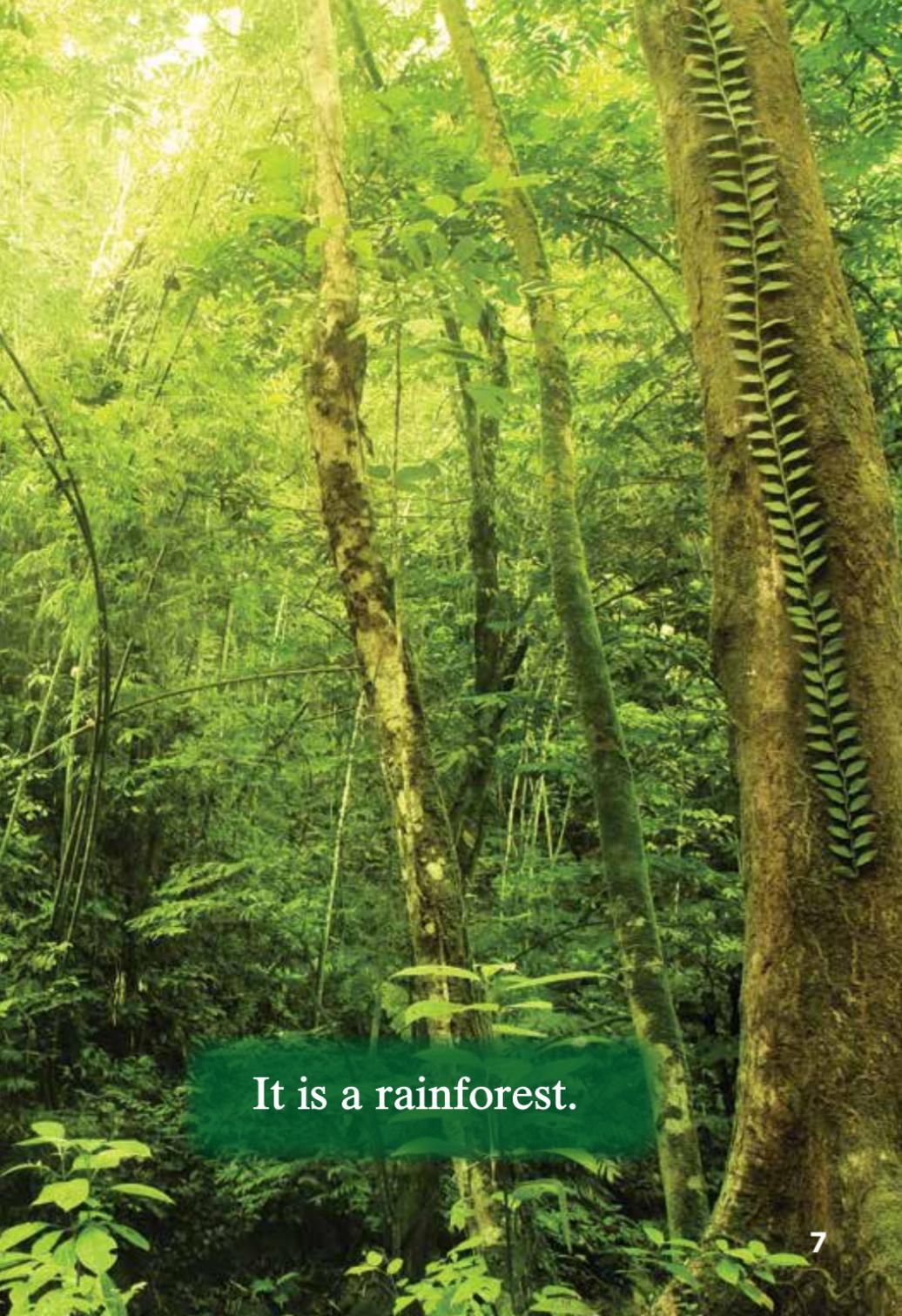
Imagine air that is thick with warmth and wetness. Birds chirp and monkeys chatter. Long, leafy vines twist around trees.



Colorful flowers look up and try to see the sun peeking through the branches of tall, green trees.

A photograph of a lush tropical forest. The scene is filled with tall, slender tree trunks and a dense canopy of green leaves. Sunlight filters through the foliage, creating a dappled light effect. The overall atmosphere is vibrant and verdant.

What is this place?



It is a rainforest.

What Are Rainforests?



Tropical (TROP-i-kuhl) rainforests are sometimes called *jungles*.

Rainforests are like other forests because they are filled with trees and plants. But rainforests are different in one special way. They are very wet.

Most rainforests get a lot of **rainfall**. They are also warm most of the time. In this way, trees and plants stay colorful and healthy.



Rainforests get about 90 inches of rain each year. That's about twice as tall as you!

Rainforests like this are called **tropical rainforests.**



Other rainforests are wet, too, but for more reasons than rainfall. They get a lot of water from **fog** and the moist air that comes from nearby oceans.



There are many more tropical rainforests than temperate (TEM-per-it) rainforests.

Rainforests like this are called **temperate rainforests**. They are not as warm as tropical rainforests, but they do not get very cold either.

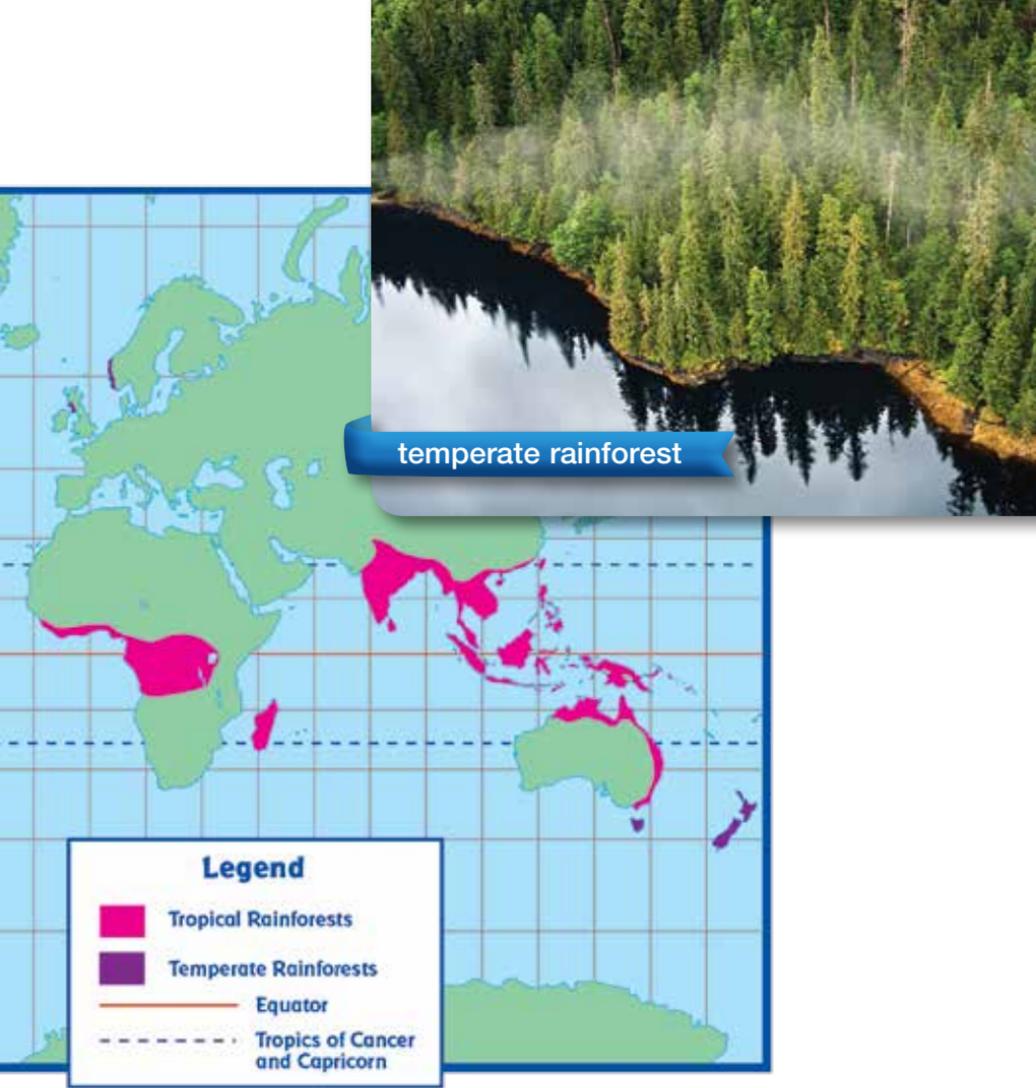
Where Are They?

The Equator (ih-KWEY-ter) is an imaginary line around the middle of Earth. It is halfway between the north and south poles.



tropical rainforest

Tropical rainforests are found near Earth's equator.



Temperate rainforests are found near coasts. They are further north and south of the Equator than tropical rainforests.



The largest tropical rainforest in the world is called the Amazon Rainforest. It is in South America.



More than one-third of all the world's plant and animal species live in the Amazon Rainforest!

Almost all the room in a rainforest is taken up by plants. There are even some plants that live on other plants!



jaguar



water lily



orchid

The Amazon is so full of life that about 50,000 different kinds of plants, 1,800 different kinds of fish, and 1,200 different kinds of butterflies live there.



giant sloth



toucan



capybara

There are so many plants and animals in the Amazon Rainforest that we still do not know all that live there.



As old as this rainforest is, it is a baby compared to tropical rainforests. Tropical rainforests are millions of years old!

About one-fourth of the world's temperate rainforest is found in British Columbia, Canada. This rainforest is very old. Some trees have been living there for 2,000 years.





Trees keep growing all their lives. So the oldest trees in this rainforest are very large. One spruce tree is 312 feet tall. One fir tree is 40 feet wide. That means that this fir tree is as wide as 10 of your friends lying end to end!

Rainforest Layers



tarantula

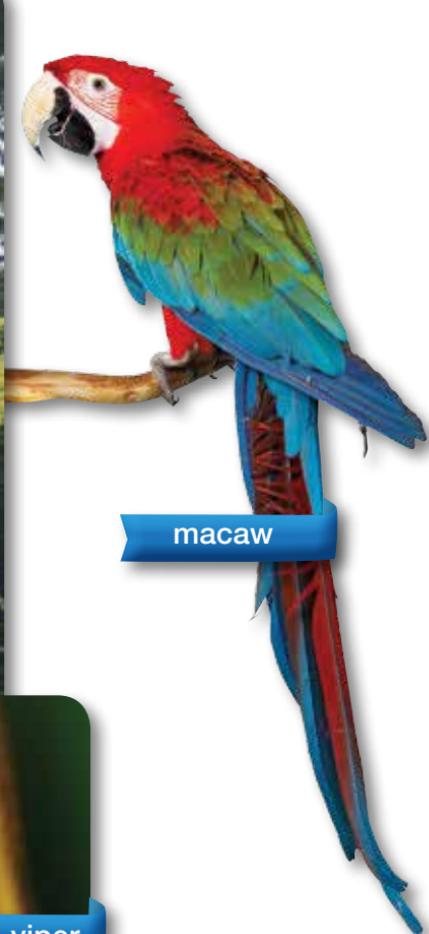
There are three layers of life in a rainforest. The first layer is called the **forest floor**. It is dark, wet, and soft. This is the area along the ground where many insects live.



Next comes the **understory**. It is cool and dark. Small trees and shrubs grow there. Butterflies and some small animals live in the understory.



Finally, there is the **canopy**.
This is the top of the rainforest's tall trees. Many birds and snakes live in the canopy.



macaw



eyelash viper



Rainforest Animals



black bear



raccoon

Animals that live in the temperate rainforest are mainly the same as animals you would find in the woods. Black bears, elk, beavers, and raccoons are just some of these animals.



golden lion tamarind



tree frog

Half of all the animal species on Earth can be found in the world's rainforests.



squash bug

Tropical rainforests are filled with jungle animals. There are monkeys, tree frogs, snakes, and jaguars there. Birds of all kinds and colors fill the trees. Insects as big as your fist buzz through the air!

Protecting the Rainforest



Even though rainforests are home to so many plants and animals, people have been chopping them down for years. They use the land for farms and buildings. They use the trees for wood, paper, medicines, and more.

A large pile of cut logs is the central focus of the image. The logs are stacked haphazardly, showing various cross-sections and bark textures. In the background, a dense forest of tall trees is visible under a cloudy sky. In the foreground, a chainsaw with a yellow and black body and a silver chain is positioned diagonally, pointing towards the left. A green-bordered text box is overlaid on the left side of the log pile.

The most important thing we get from rainforests is the air we breathe. Plants and trees release oxygen. People cannot live without the oxygen that trees and plants give them.

These things are important, but our rainforests are important, too. Many of our rainforests are gone forever. We need to protect them before it is too late.

Glossary



canopy



fog



forest floor



rainfall



**temperate
rainforest**



**tropical
rainforest**



understory

Step into the
Rainforest

What gets about 90 inches of rain each year? What has forests full of colorful flowers and insects as big as your fist? Grab your camera and an umbrella. Take a tour of the world's lush rainforests!



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