

# Where to find rainforests

**Tropical rainforests are found inside the part of the Earth called the Tropics.**

1. Find an atlas and then choose a map of the world.
2. Look for the lines that say “Tropic of Cancer” (to the north of the Equator) and “Tropic of Capricorn” (to the south of the Equator).

Now look for the same lines on page 5 of the *Exploring the Endangered Rainforest* book or page 6 of *Rainforest Life*.

**The line between them is the Equator.**

3. The green shaded areas are places where rainforests could exist (although many have been cut down and replaced with farmland).

(a) In which continent do rainforests exist farthest north?

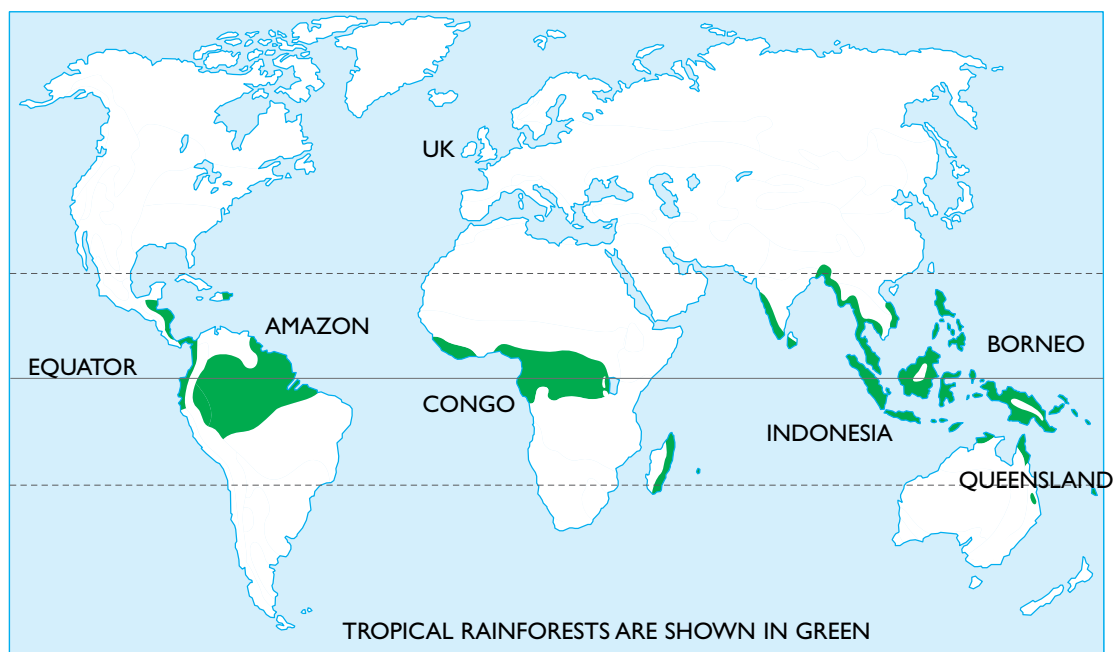
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(b) In which continent are they found farthest south?

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4. Which continent has the smallest amount of rainforest?

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This is an activity involving atlas skills.

Students will need to find an atlas (a printed version) and then flick through the pages until they find a world map. This may mean a trip to the library, but it helps establish that a variety of resources are needed.

Most world maps are at the front of an atlas.

Make sure students understand that world maps come first, then regional maps.

They will have several maps to choose from. Most of them will have the tropics marked on, but help them to select one that also has rainfall patterns on.

With your help, the more able students will be able to relate the map of tropical rainfall to the rainforest distribution and thus help explain why the two words 'tropical' and 'rain' are used before the word 'forest'.

Many students will now know the tropics and why they are where they are. You may wish to do some cross-curricular work on the Earth as a spinning planet to explain this (our Science@School book *5E Earth and beyond* has explanations). The explanation of the spinning globe also shows students why the tropical rainforest climate (which we shall come to) has no seasons.

By asking students which continent the rainforests go farthest north and south and asking them which continent has least rainforest we are doing two things: we are getting them to understand that rainforests occur on several continents (not just South America, with the Amazon) and that the rainforests vary in detail. Without this focus, many students will just see a band of green and not see the real pattern.

We wish to establish in their minds that there is variety across the world's rainforests.