



Secrets of the Rain Forest

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Before Reading

- Ask the children what they think the book will be about.
- Ask, "How can the rain forest have secrets?"
- Ask the children to describe what they know about rain forests and what they expect to see in the book.

After Reading

Ask the children:

- What they saw that they'd never seen before.
- Their favorite secret of the rain forest.
- Whether or not they'd ever want to visit a rain forest and the reasons why or why not.

Exploring Animal Names

- Ask if they think a parrot snake is part parrot, part snake. How about a golden lion tamarin or a spider monkey?
 - Ask how they think animals' names are chosen.
 - Provide several photos and illustrations of these animals for the children to examine and decide how descriptive their names are.
- Consider pink river dolphins, harpy eagles, wandering spiders and tree frogs. Ask what their names say about them.
- Provide supplemental materials along with photos and illustrations of these additional animals to enable older children to make their own project about this topic such as a book, painting, or poster.
- Some children may want to "invent" their own animal using characteristics from different species.

Hummingbirds

- **Math:** Explain that hummingbirds are usually two and a half to four and a half inches long and weigh about one-eighth of an ounce (the same weight as a penny).
 - Have each child measure the length of their hand, palm to fingertip with a ruler, then draw a line on paper the same length. Next to that have them draw a three-inch line, the average length of a hummingbird, then compare the two.
 - Have the children measure other items – pencil, crayon, marker, shoe or thumb – and compare using words such as longer, shorter, wide, narrow, etc.
- **Movement:** Explain that hummingbirds' wings move very fast, so fast that sometimes it's hard to see where they have flown. They can fly from 30 to 63 miles per hour if they are diving, as fast as a car!
 - Play a fast piece of music such as Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee" and encourage the children to "fly" like hummingbirds.
 - Then play a cool-down piece such as Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."



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- **Observation:** Explain that hummingbirds drink the nectar from flowers with their long tongue, but that they also eat small insects, insect eggs and spiders. They will chase other birds and even bees that are getting near their food.
 - If hummingbirds live in your area, put a hummingbird feeder filled with sugar water outside your window to allow the children to observe them.
 - Older children may want to keep a journal of their sightings with time of day, how many they saw at a time, how much sugar water the hummingbirds drank, how long they stayed at the feeder and so on.

Art

Provide photos and illustrations of the red-eyed tree frog to show the students how colorful it is: green with bright-red eyes, gold feet, blue stripes and a white underbelly. Then have them choose another rain forest animal to draw or paint, encouraging them to add splashes of unexpected colors. Display all their creations.

Creative Writing

Describe how the leafcutter ant cuts bits of leaves with its jaws and carries them to its nest for food, sometimes more than 100 feet. Groups of ants perform different duties for the ant colony, such as defend, forage for leaves, patrol the area and tend the gardens and young. Have the children write a story about the leaf cutter ants and the different jobs they might do.

Science/Growing Plants

Bromeliads live on tree branches in the rain forest, but these spiky plants are often grown as houseplants. Bring a bit of the rain forest to the classroom by having the children care for a class plant.

Guided Independent Study for Older Children

- Have each child choose a creature or plant from the book and provide resources for them to use to find out as much as they can about it.
- Ask them to write several sentences or paragraphs about what they've learned.
- Students may want to present their project to the group.
- This project might also include

Drawings and photos	Video	Script for a skit
Diagrams	Posters/display boards	Sound effects
Diorama	Models (figures)	Costumes/masks*
Maps	Songs	Sculpture

* See *Rain Forest Masks*, Kane Miller 2017