



# THE AMAZON





# Welcome to Brazil!

Before we dive in, meet Archie and his friends, the Intrepid Explorers. They are five adventurous Aussie kids who travel the world on missions to recover stolen artefacts or protect endangered species. This time, they are headed to Brazil. Before landing, they have decided to read up on the country's geography, history, and wildlife. Right now, they've decided to read up on the Amazon. We hope you have fun learning with them!

And the adventure does not stop there. On our website, [www.thelittleexplorersjournal.com](http://www.thelittleexplorersjournal.com), under the resources page, we've also shared fun resources from their journey, including landmarks, more wildlife facts, quizzes, games, and activities to keep your kids learning and having fun every step of the way.





# what's the Amazon?

**The Amazon rainforest** is the biggest tropical rainforest in the world, and it spreads across nine countries in South America. Most of the Amazon is in Brazil (60%), but large parts are also in Peru and Colombia. Smaller sections of the rainforest are found in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. It is so large 6.7 million sq km (2.7 million sq miles) that it covers more land than India and is almost as big as Australia! The Amazon is not only a forest; it also includes rivers, wetlands, and flooded areas that all work together to create a huge and important ecosystem.





# Ecosystems in the Amazon

An **ecosystem** is a special environment where every living thing depends on others to survive, so if one part changes, it affects the whole system. The Amazon is one of the richest and most complex ecosystems on Earth because it has a lot of land close to the equator, a stable warm and wet climate, and many kinds of habitats that interact with each other. Within the Amazon region, scientists recognize several major types of ecosystems. **The first is varzea**, which are floodplain forests along rivers that get flooded during the rainy season. These forests are very fertile because the river brings nutrient-rich water and soil, and animals like fish use this water to swim into the forest and feed on fruits and seeds.

The **second is terra firma**, which means solid ground. These forests are on higher land that does not flood. Because they stay dry, they support very tall trees and a huge variety of plants and animals. Terra firma forests make up most of the rainforest and are home to many of the species that people think of when they imagine the Amazon. The **third major ecosystem is called igapó**, which are forests that are flooded by blackwater rivers; rivers with darker, nutrient-poor water. These areas stay underwater for many months, so the plants and animals there are specially adapted to live with long periods of flooding.





# Biodiversity in the Amazon

The Amazon is one of the most biodiverse places on Earth, which means it has an incredible variety of living things. Scientists estimate there are millions of species in the Amazon (10% of known species on earth), including animals, plants, insects, and tiny creatures that we still haven't discovered. The rainforest has thousands of kinds of trees, and many animals live only in the Amazon, like the pink river dolphin and the harpy eagle. Because the Amazon has so many different habitats, it supports more life than almost anywhere else on the planet. In the rivers, you can find animals like the piranha, electric eel, and giant otter. In the forest canopy (the top layer of the trees), there are macaws, toucans, sloths, and howler monkeys. On the forest floor, you can find animals like the jaguar, tapir, anaconda, and poison dart frogs. Even tiny creatures like leafcutter ants, butterflies, and tree frogs play a huge role in keeping the rainforest healthy.



**Jaguar**



**Anaconda**



**Pink dolphin**





# Tribes & Indigenous People of the Amazon

The Amazon is home to many indigenous tribes who have lived in the rainforest for thousands of years. Some of the most well-known groups include the Yanomami and the Kayapó, who have built deep knowledge of the forest and how to live from it. Indigenous people in the Amazon have developed lifestyles that are well adapted to the rainforest's environment. Many tribes live near rivers and use canoes to travel, fish, and trade. Their homes are often made from materials found in the forest, like wood, palm leaves, and vines, and they work together in clans or small villages.

Traditionally, tribes hunted wildlife close to rivers, including fish, turtles, capybara, and crocodiles. In the past, hunting tools such as blowguns, arrows tipped with poison, and spears were commonly used, though some tribes now use guns when they can afford them. Many tribes also gather fruit, nuts, and plants, and grow crops like manioc (cassava), bananas, beans, corn, and peppers.

The spiritual world is extremely important to many Amazon tribes. They often believe that animals and plants have spirits, and the shaman is a special person who knows about plants and healing and can communicate with the spirit world. For example, the Wajapi believe that animals are actually human beings with souls and that plants also hold spirits, only healers can communicate with them.

Today, many tribes live in protected areas called indigenous lands, but they still face challenges like land loss due to logging, mining, and settlers. Despite this, indigenous people continue to protect the forest because their culture, food, and way of life depend on it.

## Conquest of the Amazon





# Protecting the Amazon

The Amazon rainforest is in danger of reaching a point where it could change forever. So far, almost one-fifth of the forest has been cleared, and another one-fifth has been damaged. The pressure on the Amazon keeps growing, which is why it's so important to protect it now. Even though the Amazon takes up only about 1% of Earth's land, it is home to about 10% of all the world's known animals and plants, and scientists think there are many more species still undiscovered. Amazingly, researchers find a new plant or animal in the Amazon roughly every two days. It is also the main home for jaguars and river dolphins. In fact, over 70% of all jaguars live in the Amazon, so if the rainforest disappears, jaguars could be in real danger.

The Amazon is important for people too. Many communities rely on it for food, water, medicine, and wood, and the forest also helps control the world's climate. The Amazon stores an enormous amount of carbon, about 150–200 billion tons, and the trees release around 20 billion tons of water into the air every day, which helps create rain and keeps the climate stable. Here's where you can donate if you want to help: WWF (World Wildlife Fund), Rainforest Trust and Amazon Conservation Team (ACT).



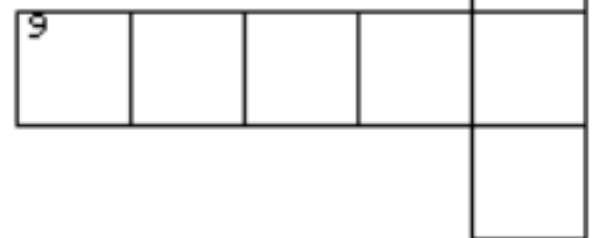
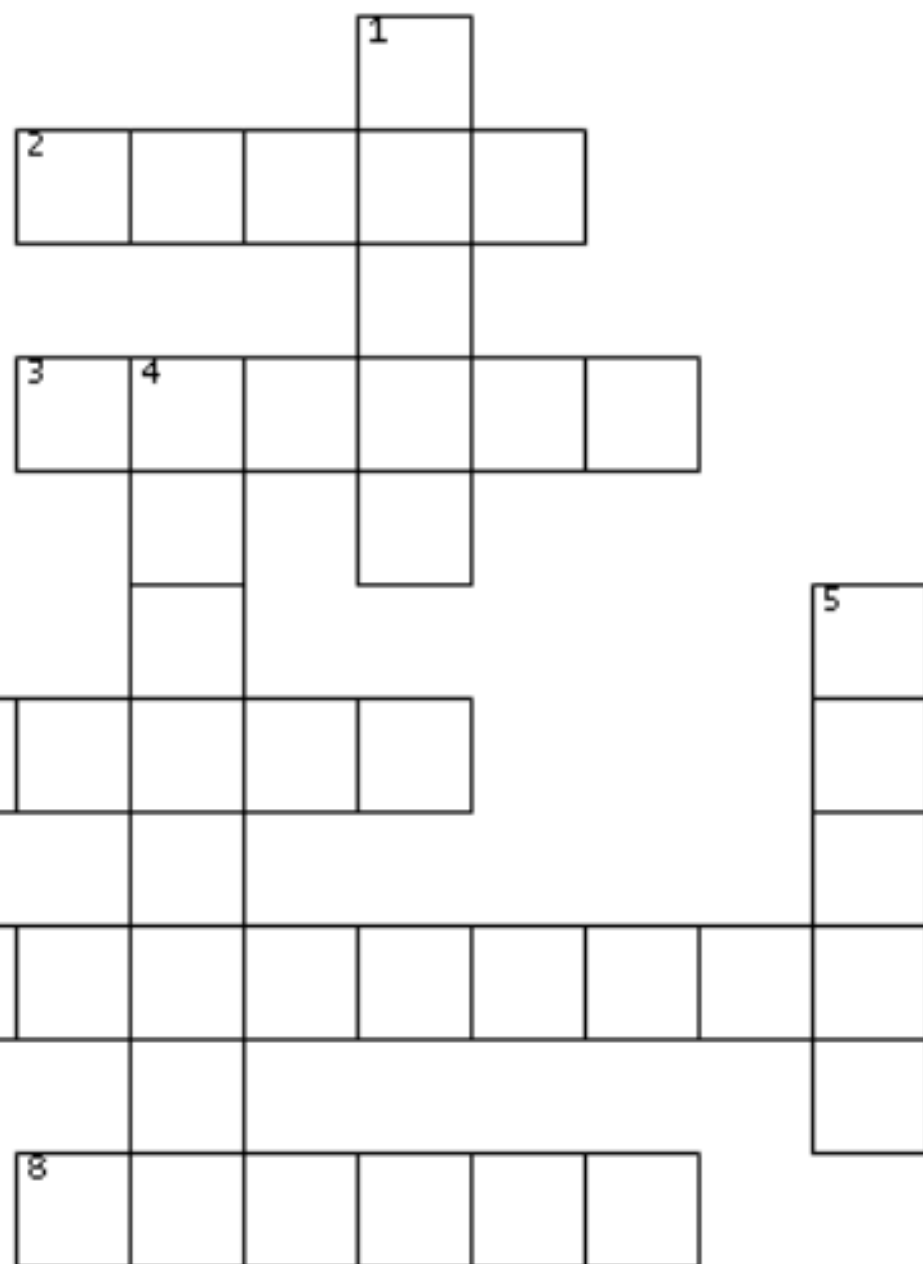








# AMAZON CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 2. A long tool used for hunting or fishing.
- 3. The leafy roof at the top of the forest where many animals live.
- 6. A colourful bird with a big, bright beak.
- 7. A hot, wet forest with lots of trees and animals.
- 8. A big spotted cat that lives in the Amazon rainforest.
- 9. A group of people who live together and share traditions.

## DOWN

- 1. A small boat used to travel on rivers.
- 4. A very long snake that swims in Amazon rivers and wraps around its prey.
- 5. A very slow animal that hangs upside down in trees.
- 7. A long stretch of moving water where fish and dolphins live.

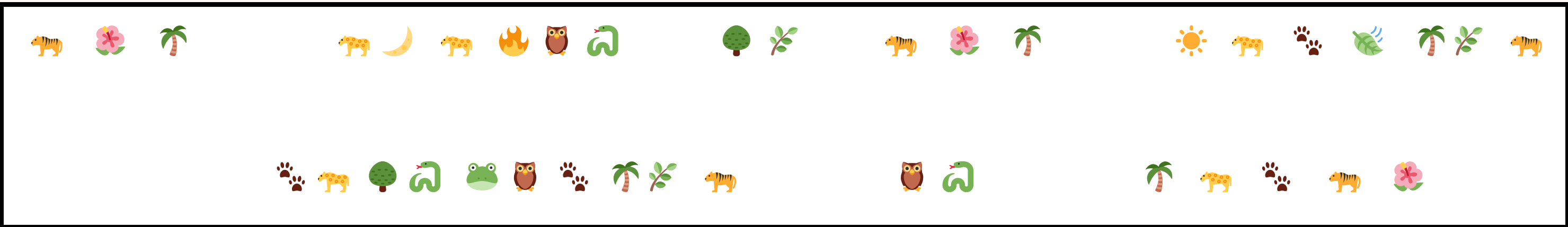




CRACK THE CODE: AMAZON SECRET MESSAGE



THE INTREPID EXPLORERS HAVE DISCOVERED A HIDDEN MESSAGE CARVED INTO A TREE DEEP IN THE AMAZON JUNGLE. USE THE AMAZON CODE BELOW TO CRACK THE MESSAGE AND DISCOVER A RAINFOREST SECRET!



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Discover Japan with the Intrepid Explorers!

In the Japan digital country unit, join Violet, Archie, and Ruby on an exciting adventure in Japan, as they land in Kyoto and solve a mysterious puzzle! !

## Activities + Games

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

## AUSTRALIA!



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By The Little Explorers' Journal



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