Introduction

The film A Walk in the Rainforest has been produced by the creators of OWL Magazine to provide young viewers with a glimpse of the tropical rainforest. The major focus is on the rainforest preserve known as Chan Chich, in the small Central American country of Belize where eight-year-old Jason Harding lives with his family. Jason’s father directed the work of restoring and preserving the ancient Mayan ruins in the preserve and now oversees the fascinating variety of activities in the 125,000 acre wildlife preserve.

Seeing the film can lead to intriguing discussions and experiences for youngsters who want to know more about life in the rainforest and the importance of protecting it from further destruction. Students may also want to learn about the ancient Mayan civilizations which inhabited parts of Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, as well as their descendants who still live there.

This guide provides background information for teachers and students, references for further reading and reproducible activity sheets for student projects. The activity sheets encourage students to find out more about the plants and animals which live in the rainforest, as well as the dangers which arise from the destruction of these vital regions around the world.

While materials in this package have been prepared for children from Grades 4 to 6, both the film and some of the activities would also be suitable for younger and older children.

What This Learning Package Contains

1. The film A Walk in the Rainforest
2. This teacher’s manual providing:
   - background information
   - discussion questions based on the film
   - reproducible activity sheets describing a variety of classroom and out-of-classroom activities for individuals and groups
   - a reproducible, make-your-own glossary of useful terms
   - recommended reading and viewing

A Guide to this Guide

While the film stands on its own, it can also be viewed as part of a complete learning package. The guide furnishes teachers and students with a range of information, discussion questions and activity suggestions. These can encourage children to learn and understand more about the importance of the rainforests.

Notice the list of useful resource materials included at the end of this guide.
Purposes

The film and background materials have been prepared with following purposes in mind:

To add to the students’ knowledge of the tropical rainforests and the importance of preserving them;

To show children that people can help to preserve wildlife and the environment in which they live;

To emphasize the importance of respecting and preserving a whole environment where wildlife can survive and thrive;

To provide children with opportunities to combine environmental studies with language arts, thereby encouraging them to read for information and eventually to speak and write about the themes explored in this package;

To encourage children to become the centre of the learning experience and thus be motivated to discover as much as possible;

To illustrate the OWL philosophy that learning is an adventure that should always be fun.

Do You Remember the Part About...

The following questions will help students recall some of the principal features of the film.

1. What kinds of animals live in the preserve where Jason lives?

2. What is the tree in the preserve that has been used in the making of furniture?

3. What natural dangers would you have to be aware of during a visit to the Chan Chich preserve?

4. What ancient civilization once existed on the site of the Chan Chich preserve?

5. Why do you think the Chan Chich preserve was established?

6. How much rainforest around the world is cut down every day?

7. Why do the leaf cutter ants take leaves to their nest?

8. How did Howler monkeys get their name?
There's a jungle out there!

Jason Harding is a lucky boy. Chan Chich lodge, where he lives, is in a tropical forest preserve in Belize, a small country in Central America. Jason's father is the preserve's manager whose job it is to help protect the wildlife and the rainforest environment. Every day Jason has a chance to see monkeys, crocodiles, boa constrictors and other exotic animals.

Although Jason enjoys many of the comforts of modern life, his home is built from mahogany and roofed with thatch, materials that have come from the forest. Paths lead down by the river and into the jungle, and you can ride on horseback to an escarpment which marks the boundary between Belize and Guatemala.

1. Use an atlas to find Belize. How far is it from where you live?

2. Jason enjoys living in the jungle, because it's very peaceful and there is no traffic. Would you find it peaceful too, and would you like to live there?

3. Imagine what it would be like to live in the Chan Chich reserve or another of the world's rainforests. Write some journal entries describing a typical day at Chan Chich Lodge.

4. While it might seem as if Jason is able to do whatever he likes, there are some important rules for those who live in Chan Chich or visit there. What are some of these rules, and why do they need to be observed?

5. After you have read some more about the tropical rainforest, write a story entitled "A Day in the Jungle", in which you mention what you would find most intriguing about living there.
Saving the Rainforest

The rainforests of the world are among the most valuable areas on our planet. They help control the world's climate and produce the oxygen essential to life throughout the world. They are home to thousands of rare animals, insects and plants found nowhere else.

Rainforests are tropical jungles which are found in Central and South America, in parts of Africa, in India, Malaysia, Indo-China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Borneo and Papua New Guinea.

But everywhere the rainforests are being cut or burned down. As they disappear, so do all kinds of wildlife that cannot survive outside the rainforest canopy. Once the forests are cut down, they can never grow again, since the soil is too thin to support much new growth. The earth washes away and where there was once rainforest, soon there is desert.

1. In your atlas locate the countries where you would find rainforests.

2. Do some research to find out how much rain falls each year in a typical rainforest.

3. There are reasons for the destruction of the rainforests. Find out why it happens, and discuss with your friends what the alternatives might be.

4. Decide, with your teacher's help, what you and your class can do to save the rainforest.

5. The typical rainforest is in one of the world's tropical regions. But there are also rainforests on the Pacific coast of the northwestern United States and British Columbia. Find out about what is happening to the forest in those regions and what dangers there are to the environment.

6. Find out about organizations which are trying to save the rainforest. Ask your teacher to invite someone from one of these organizations to speak to your class, to tell you more about how you can help.
Explore Your Own Jungle

You may not live in a jungle, but not far from where you live - in your backyard, in the park nearby, in the fields at the edge of town - wildlife exists. If you're careful and observant, you can find out a lot about the birds and animals who share their habitat with you.

1. Spend some time in your backyard, in the park or in a field nearby, and try to identify the different species of wild animals which live there.

2. Use a field guide to help you make a list of the creatures you have seen.

3. If you have a camera, try to get some good photographs of each animal you've watched.

4. Ask a local wildlife expert to your school to talk about the animals you've discovered. Find out if any of them are endangered species. What are the dangers to their survival, and how you can help protect the environment in which they live?
Make-Your-Own Glossary

When scientists started exploring the rainforest, they soon discovered countless species of animals, insects and plants exist that had not been known about before. Many of them spend their lives in the forest canopy which is made up of the crowns of the tallest trees.

In *A Walk in the Rainforest*, you have learned about some of the creatures of the rainforest.

1. Use your encyclopaedia to find out more about the following animals:
   - parrot
   - keel-billed toucan
   - Baird's tapir
   - jaguar
   - morlet crocodile
   - white-lipped peccary
   - leaf-cutter ants

2. Do some research to find out other creatures that make their home in the rainforests.
Resources

From the pages of OWL
These articles are from OWL, the Discovery Magazine for Children, published by the Young Naturalist Foundation.

On the Rainforest
“Amazon Album”, April 1984
“Flying Circus”, March 1982
“Journey Through a Tropical Jungle”, October 1988
“Life in a Mini-Jungle”, April 1984
“Seeing is Deceiving”, March 1990

On Animals of the Rainforest
“The Jaguar”, March 1990
“OWL Minibook of Monkeys and Apes”, April 1981
“The Sensational Sloth”, February 1981
“The Spider Monkey - World’s Greatest Athlete”, February 1982

On Forests and Trees
“Plant Power”, May 1987
“Plants Alive”, October 1979

On the Ecology
“The Rescuers” in the Hoot Club section, January 1990
“What Exactly is the Greenhouse Effect?”, April 1990

Books

Nonfiction


Fiction
A Walk in the Rainforest
video and teacher's guide
available in the United States from:
Bullfrog Films Inc., Oley, Pennsylvania 19547,
(915) 779-8226

Canadian Distributor:
McNabb & Connolly Films
65 Heward St., #209
Toronto, Ont. M2M 2T5
(416) 462-0223

An OWL Discovery Film

For additional copies of this guide
(purchase price $3 each), or for
information on how to obtain a
subscription to OWL Magazine, one of
the world's best sources of natural
history for children, contact:

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