

## Brazil Today

### The Amazon River and Basin

Deep within the Andes Mountains of northern Peru, two rivers flow together. Their junction forms one of the greatest bodies of water in the world. This is the Amazon River. The Amazon flows down the Andes and across Brazil before it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. The river carries more water than any other river in the world. The only river that is longer is Egypt's Nile.

The Amazon and its **tributaries**<sup>1</sup> have a huge impact on Brazil's environment. The river provides water for diverse plant and animal life. Along its banks in western Brazil is the largest rainforest in the world. The rainforest covers 40% of the total land in Brazil. Rainfall in the area is very high, and it is always humid.

Many animals live in the warm, wet forest or the savannah of Central Brazil. Brazil has over 1,500 species of birds and 581 types of **amphibians**.<sup>2</sup> Can you imagine the sounds of animals echoing through the rainforest? Unfortunately, many of Brazil's species are becoming endangered. Their habitats are being destroyed by farming and the **timber**<sup>3</sup> industry.

The soil that is so **fertile**<sup>4</sup> for the rainforest also provides rich farmland. Unfortunately, Brazil's rainforests are disappearing at a rapid rate. People cut the trees for timber. Sometimes farmers burn the forests to make fields. Many plants and animals are killed or lose their habitats in the process. Fires release a lot of dangerous gases into the ozone layer of our atmosphere. Environmentalists worry that the forests' disappearing will increase global warming. Global warming happens when gases deplete the Ozone layer. The disappearance of the rainforests in Brazil may have a negative consequence for

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<sup>1</sup> **tributary**: a stream or river flowing into a larger stream or river or into a lake

<sup>2</sup> **amphibians**: cold-blooded vertebrate animals that are able to live both in water and on land.

<sup>3</sup> **timber** - wood

<sup>4</sup> **fertile**: rich; producing vegetation or crops plentifully

the whole world. Now, Brazil's government is taking steps to try to protect its amazing environment and natural beauty.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. All of the following is true about the Amazon River except:
  - a. it is longer than the Nile.
  - b. it is formed deep within the Andes Mountains.
  - c. it flows down the Andes.
  - d. it flows into the Atlantic Ocean.
2. The main idea of the first paragraph is that the Amazon
  - a. is shorter than the Nile.
  - b. is one of the greatest bodies of water in the world.
  - c. is formed in the mountains of Peru.
  - d. flows to the Atlantic Ocean.
3. Who or what is destroying the rainforest?
  - a. The animals are eating up all the plants and trees.
  - b. Environmentalists are asking that it be cut down.
  - c. Farmers are burning the trees to make fields.
  - d. The Amazon River keeps overflowing into the rain forest.
4. Which of the following is an opinion about the rainforest?
  - a. The rainforest covers 40% of the land in Brazil.
  - b. The rainforest has over 1,500 species of birds.
  - c. The rainforest is an amazing and beautiful place.
  - d. The rainforest is humid.
5. In the first paragraph of the passage the author
  - a. compares the Amazon River to the rainforests
  - b. persuades the reader that the Nile River is better than the Amazon River
  - c. compares the Amazon River and the Nile River
  - d. compares Brazil and Peru
6. How many species of birds are in Brazil?

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7. Describe one effect of the destruction of the rainforest.

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ it is good that Brazilian farmers want to work and produce more food, some of them are cutting down trees in the rainforest so they have more land.

- a. However
- b. Because
- c. Although
- d. Before

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Some Brazilian farmers who want more land are cutting down trees in the rainforest.

Who? some Brazilian farmers

(are doing) What? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Vocabulary Word:** fertile: rich; producing vegetation or food crops plentifully.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Teacher Guide and Answers**

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 840

**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive - the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

**Passage Summary:** The author describes the Amazon river and the Amazon rainforest surrounding it as well as the dangers facing the rainforest.

1. All of the following is true about the Amazon River except:
  - a. **it is longer than the Nile.**
  - b. it is formed deep within the Andes Mountains.
  - c. it flows down the Andes.
  - d. it flows into the Atlantic Ocean.
2. The main idea of the first paragraph is that the Amazon
  - a. is shorter than the Nile.
  - b. **is one of the greatest bodies of water in the world.**
  - c. is formed in the mountains of Peru.
  - d. flows to the Atlantic Ocean.
3. Who or what is destroying the rainforest?
  - a. The animals are eating up all the plants and trees.
  - b. Environmentalists are asking that it be cut down.
  - c. **Farmers are burning the trees to make fields.**
  - d. The Amazon River keeps overflowing into the rain forest.
4. Which of the following is an opinion about the rainforest?
  - a. The rainforest covers 40% of the land in Brazil.
  - b. The rainforest has over 1,500 species of birds.
  - c. **The rainforest is an amazing and beautiful place.**
  - d. The rainforest is humid.
5. In the first paragraph of the passage the author
  - a. compares the Amazon River to the rainforests
  - b. persuades the reader that the Nile River is better than the Amazon River
  - c. **compares the Amazon River and the Nile River**
  - d. compares Brazil and Peru

6. How many species of birds are in Brazil?

**Suggested answer:** Over 1,500.

7. Describe one effect of the destruction of the rainforest.

**Suggested answer:** Possible effects include that many animals are becoming endangered because of the loss of their habitats, or that the fires in the rainforest release gases into the ozone layer, harming the atmosphere.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ it is good that Brazilian farmers want to work and produce more food, some of them are cutting down trees in the rainforest so they have more land.

- e. However
- f. Because
- g. Although**
- h. Before

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Some Brazilian farmers who want more land are cutting down trees in the rainforest.

Who? Some Brazilian farmers

(are doing) What? **cutting down trees**

Where? **in the rainforest**

Why? **because they want more land**

**10. Vocabulary Word:** fertile: rich; producing vegetation or food crops plentifully.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.