

# CREATURES OF THE AMAZON

- 1** The Amazon Rainforest is home to more species of plants and animals than anywhere else in the world. Sadly, people are cutting down billions of trees and destroying the homes of animals that live there. Because of this destruction, many Amazon creatures are now in danger of becoming extinct.

**2 THE KING OF THE FOREST**

We usually think of the lion as the traditional king of the jungle, but in the Amazon Rainforest the eagle is king. The Harpy Eagle, which lives in the highest trees of the Amazon, is one of the largest and strongest eagles in the world. It weighs 6 to 9 kilos, is a meter long, and has a wingspan<sup>1</sup> of up to 2 meters.

The Harpy Eagle can easily catch a monkey in a tree or other animals with its 5-inch talons<sup>2</sup>. The eagle's talons are so strong they crush<sup>3</sup> the victim and kill it in seconds. The Harpy Eagle isn't eaten or hunted by any other animal in the forest.



THE HARPY EAGLE

**3 THE SMALL BUT DEADLY FROG**

Poison dart frogs are very tiny (about 2 ½ cm long), but they are one of the planet's most poisonous species. The local people use poison from the frogs' skin on their blow darts<sup>4</sup>. One little frog has enough poison to kill 10,000 mice or 20 people!

Most of the forest animals know that they shouldn't eat these colorful little creatures. The frogs' bright colors – yellow, orange, green and blue – have a purpose. They tell other creatures: "I'm poison. Don't eat me."



THE POISON DART FROG

**4 THE HARD-TO-SEE-SNAKE**

Many people are afraid of Amazon pit vipers, which are extremely dangerous. These poisonous snakes, which grow to 1.6 meters long, are usually found on the forest floor. The color of pit vipers makes them very hard to see, so it is easy to step on one by accident and get bitten.



THE AMAZON PIT VIPER

- 5** We need to do all we can to preserve the rainforest. If the destruction doesn't stop, many animals will become extinct.

<sup>1</sup>wingspan מוטת כנפיים / باع الجناح

<sup>2</sup>talons טפרים (ציפורניים) / مخالب (أظفار)

<sup>3</sup>crush מוחצים / تسحق، تهرس

<sup>4</sup>blow darts חיצוני שיפה / أسهم تُنفخ من أنبوب

**\*\*\*Complete the following exercises. Send your answers on Mashov.**

1. Why are so many creatures in the Amazon in danger of becoming extinct?

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2. Complete the chart about creatures of the Amazon.

| Name of animal      | Where found in the forest | What it eats              | Size and weight |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.                  |                           | monkeys,<br>other animals |                 |
| 2. Poison dart frog | —                         | —                         |                 |
| 3.                  |                           | —                         | 1.6 meters long |

3. Why is the Harpy Eagle the king of the Amazon Rainforest?

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4. The colors of the frog are mentioned to explain why .....

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5. Why are pit viper bites common in the Amazon?

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6. What do the poison dart frog and the pit viper have in common?

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7. Which of these animals is useful to people? Explain.

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8. Read the first sentence of each section of the article. Then match each section to its main idea below.

| Section | Main Idea                                                         |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | ..... a. There's a reason why people are afraid of the pit viper. |
| 2       | ..... b. Many animals live in the forest.                         |
| 3       | ..... c. It's important to protect the rainforest.                |
| 4       | ..... d. This animal rules the Amazon Rainforest.                 |
| 5       | ..... e. Even little animals can be dangerous.                    |

9. Which of the animals described do you think is the most dangerous? Why?

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