**Rainforest Diary**

**Monday 1st August** (temperature 27ºC; humidity 55%; precipitation 0mm)

Well – that was a long journey! 8266km to be precise! The flight from London to Manaus (Brazil) took 17 long, dreary hours. We arrived at the hotel about an hour ago and Dad has allowed me to do this quick update before bed. I’m pretty exhausted after all that travelling, so I’m more than ready to go to sleep now. I wish I had more energy though, as Manaus looks like a pretty cool city to explore. Dad calls it ‘the gateway to the Amazon rainforest’ as it’s the perfect place to begin our expedition. He is hoping to organise some transport tomorrow to take us into the heart of the rainforest. At 10 years old, dad was worried that I might be too young for a journey like this, so I’m really glad he changed his mind and let me tag along. I hope I don’t get in his way too much.

**Tuesday 2nd August** (temperature 29ºC; humidity 70%; precipitation 0mm)

Did you know that the Amazon rainforest is the largest rainforest in the world? It’s so big that the UK and Ireland can fit into it 17 times! After spending the day travelling through it, I can truly appreciate this fact.

We began the day sailing by ferry along the Rio Tapajós (a major tributary of the Amazon). The frequent roar of the howler monkeys was a constant reminder of how wild and potentially dangerous this place can be. We also spotted plenty of caiman (a member of the alligator family) sunning themselves on the banks of the river. I prayed that our boat wouldn’t sink! Many, many kilometres later, we disembarked at the small town of Alter do Chão. This was where Dad had arranged to meet our guide, called Matheus. We spent a few hours collecting the supplies we needed for our journey before jumping into a muddy but sturdy looking off-roader, to be driven deeper into the rainforest.

Sadly, the lovely air-conditioned 4x4 has taken us as far as it can; the last leg of our journey needs to be done on foot. We have set up camp for the night and Dad is attempting to heat up some black bean and sausage stew on the camp fire. Currently, I’m lying unsteadily in a hammock, attempting to write this entry. The hammock will hopefully help me avoid the many snakes, spiders and insects that wander around the forest floor at night. I don’t think I’m going to get much sleep tonight!

**Wednesday 3rd August** (temperature 29ºC; humidity 82%; precipitation 10mm)

Today has been tough! The humidity has been unbearable and we’ve been hit by two torrential rainstorms. Despite this, we’ve managed to walk over 15km through some pretty tough terrain. The heat and humidity have sapped my energy though; I’m tired, grubby and very sweaty. Nevertheless, the rainforest is a truly magnificent place. The trees are absolutely massive. They have smooth, straight trunks that shoot up for 100 feet or more, before branching out to create a thick canopy, high above the forest floor. Light levels in the forest can be very low at times, due to the thickness of the canopy. Matheus told me that in the places where the canopy is really thick, it can take ten minutes for the rain to reach the ground. However, it’s thanks to these conditions that so many species thrive here. Apparently, there are over 2.5 million types of insect living here – I think I’ve been bitten by half of them!

I have no idea how Matheus did it but he managed to deliver us safely to our intended destination: the village of the Wajapi tribe. It was late when we arrived so we have been shown to a hut where we are to stay the night. I can’t wait to explore the village in the morning and Dad is so excited about finally being able to unlock some of the secrets of this magical place.

**Thursday 4th August** (temperature 28ºC; humidity 72%; precipitation 5mm)

Today, I have discovered such a lot about the Wajapi people. They have lived in the Amazon rainforest for thousands of years and have developed a deep understanding of their environment. These people are completely self-sufficient. They grow their own crops and eat the edible plants that grow naturally around them. The river also acts as an important lifeline. They use it for drinking water, as a means of transport and as a place to hunt fish, turtles, capybara and caiman. I admit to being a little disappointed by the lack of poisoned darts being used for hunting. Guns now appear to be the weapon of choice. This remote village must have some links with the outside world.

Unfortunately, we have been told that loggers and developers are wanting to cut down vast numbers of trees in the area. They want to clear the forest so they can make way for grazing animals and crops. The tribe are concerned about the affect this will have on the indigenous plants and animals. Dad has promised to do all he can to help protect this area.

Dad spent many hours talking to a very important person: the shaman. The shaman has great knowledge of the local plants and animals and it’s believed that he can even communicate with them. Dad is primarily here to discuss the shaman’s knowledge of medicinal plants. Over time, this tribe have learnt how to utilise the healing properties of the plants growing naturally around them. Dad has always believed that the cure to many diseases and ailments can be found in the plants of the rainforest. Luckily, the shaman has allowed him to take some samples of the plants they use. I have my fingers crossed that these samples will help Dad find the answers he has been looking for.

**Friday 5th August** (temperature 30ºC; humidity 79%; precipitation 0mm)

Today has been hot and humid (as usual) but at least it hasn’t rained! I spent a fun morning playing with some children who were a similar age to me. We had great fun trying to understand each other with the help of a bit of sign language and mime. Sadly, it was also time to go.

The trek back to the 4x4 didn’t seem as bad this time. I must be getting used to these humid conditions. Although when Matheus turned on the air-conditioning, I thought I’d died and gone to heaven. Bliss! We’ve a long drive ahead of us now before reaching the town of Alter do Chão. Dad wants to spend the night there before sailing back to Manaus, ready to catch the flight home.

Even though I’ve found the rainforest incredibly tough at times, I’ll never forget this once in a lifetime experience. I intend to keep this diary in a very safe place, so when I’m old and forgetful, I’ll still be able to recall my days of adventure.

Rainforest Diary – Comprehension

Section A

1. How do we know that this is a diary?

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1. Why did the diarist need to sleep in a hammock?

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1. What different modes of transport has the diarist used to get to the village?

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1. If large numbers of trees get cut down, how do you think this will affect the plants and animals?

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1. Why did the children need to use sign language and mime?

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Section B

1. How much rain has there been today and how do you know this?

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1. Why is the diarist worried about the boat sinking?

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1. In what ways has the day been tough for the diarist?

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1. The tribe have had to learn how to use plants as medicine. Why is this?

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1. What is the purpose of the brackets in the text?

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Section C

1. Why isn’t the diarist at school?

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1. What does the word ‘tributary’ mean? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. ‘Nevertheless, the rainforest is a truly magnificent place.’ Is this sentence a fact or opinion? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do you think the river is a good place to hunt for food? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you think the diarist plans to go back to the Amazon rainforest again? Explain your answer in detail with reference to the text.

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Are the following statements True or False?

Dad calls Manaus ‘the gateway to the Amazon rainforest’ as it’s the perfect place to begin our expedition.

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The Amazon rainforest is so big that the UK and Ireland can fit into it 71 times!

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They spotted plenty of caiman (a member of the monkey family) sunning themselves on the banks of the river.

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