



the
Borneo
Initiative

School Program

Introduction lesson
and work sheet





Discover the forests of Borneo

Borneo is an island in Southeast Asia that is divided between three countries. The southern and largest part of the island belongs to Indonesia and is officially called Kalimantan. The north of the island is part of Malaysia and then there is the mini-state of Brunei, which lies entirely on Borneo. The island has the oldest rainforests in the world.



This is a map of Borneo. The island is well twenty times as big as the Netherlands. For each color, put the name of the country to which that part of the island belongs :

green: _____

orange: _____

yellow: _____

Rainforest

In the past Borneo was almost completely covered with rainforests. Now 80% of it has been cut down or burned to the ground. With every piece of forest that disappears, animals such as rhinos, elephants and orangutans lose their habitat. As a result, many people lost the land where they lived and had to move. The disappearance of forest is called deforestation.



In order to combat deforestation, there are international agreements on the management of forests. Wooden products now have a hallmark, such as the *Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®)*. This way you can be sure that the wood has not been illegally felled and that no forest has disappeared for it.

In the rainforest there is no difference between summer and winter. The whole year it is quite hot : an average of 27 degrees. Nowhere else will you find so many types of animals and plants. The tall trees, which can live up to 1,400 years old, are home to poisonous snakes and frogs and colorful birds and butterflies. On the ground, insects crawl and predators hunt.

What image is of the rainforest in Borneo? _____



1.



2.



3.

Orangutan

Orangutan in Borneo is disappearing faster than expected

SOURCE: NOS NEWS • FOREIGN DESK • 16-02-2018

The Borneo orangutan is not doing well. Since 1999, more than half of the island's population has disappeared.

The great apes are disappearing due to a combination of deforestation, the creation of oil palm plantations and also hunting. This is shown by a new study in the journal *Current Biology*.

The fact that hunting plays a major role in the disappearance of the orangutan was new to the researchers. "We estimate that about 1,500 to 2,500 orangutans are killed every year. Partly simply from hunting, when hunters encounter them, they are shot. They are eaten," says naturalist Erik Meijaard.

He says that ape-human conflict also play a role. "Due to deforestation, the orangutans lose their natural habitat. Then they hang in the fruit trees in the plantations. Farmers don't like that, so they shoot at the monkeys. Because that fruit is their commodity."

It is estimated that there are about 100,000 orangutans in Borneo. In the wild, the monkey is mainly found on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. The population on Sumatra is also under considerable pressure, there are an estimated 12,000 orangutans left.

→ **the habitat** = living area

→ **the population** = group of conspecifics in a certain area

Read the text and answer the questions . The answers can be found in the text.

Why is it that there are fewer and fewer orangutans on Borneo? Name three reasons :

1.

2.

3.

What is deforestation?

What does the researcher mean when he says that the orangutans are losing their "natural habitat" ?

Why are orangutans hunted? Take two reasons from the text:

1.

2.

On which islands orangutans live in the wild?

Compare the first and the last paragraph.

How many orangutans are there still in

Borneo ? _____

What was the population approximately in

1999? _____

Palm oil

Palm oil is cheap and easy to make. On Borneo, large pieces of rainforest are cut down to build plantations full of oil palms . We call the palm oil that comes from such plantations "not sustainable" because it is at the expense of nature. If no forests have been cut down to establish the plantations, this is often stated on packaging of products containing palm oil. Therefore, always check whether the packaging states that the palm oil has been sustainably sourced.

Palm oil can be found in many more products than you might think at first glance . Did you know it is in shampoo and toothpaste? But also your breakfast or a snack can contain palm oil . Maybe you even have a product of palm oil in your lunch box? You can find palm oil for example in margarine, soups and sauces, peanut butter, candy and chips and in many ready-made meals.

Circle the products that you think contain palm oil.



Which products with palm oil do you eat? _____

Can you come up with a solution to use less palm oil yourself?
