

howler monkey - Central & South America

The howler monkey is the biggest monkey in it's habitat. It is about four feet long, including the tail, and weighs 12 to 20 lbs. It is known for the very loud howl it can make because of a special bony box in the throat which amplifies the sound. The fur is usually black, reddish, or brown. The howler feeds on leaves, fruit and nuts which it gathers as it moves around the territory established by it's troop of about 18 members. Babies travel by clinging to their mother's stomachs and purr when they are happy. Howlers are independent in about six months. Adults have no real natural enemies but deforestation has caused their numbers to decline.

leafcutter ants - South America
Leafcutter ants build giant underground colonies that sometimes house half a million ants and several queens. To provide food they march out at night, cut up any foliage in their path, and take it back to the nest where it is chewed up to make compost which in turn supports a special type of fungus that they grow for food.

Amazon dolphin - South America

One of the most startling features of the Amazon dolphin is it's pink color. The young are born bluish gray but as they mature, the pink pigment spreads from the beak, around the eyes and down the back and sides to the tail. The dolphin grows to about six feet in length and feeds on fish and shrimp it finds using echolocation as it travels the tributaries of the Amazon river. It differs from marine dolphins with a long flexible beak, a small dorsal fin and a very flexible head and neck.



plumed basilisk - Central America

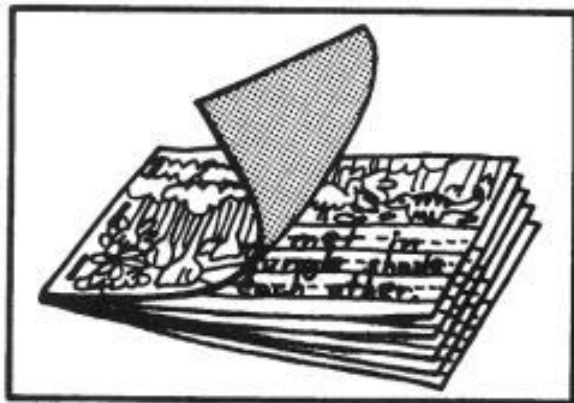
crocodile - Africa

plumed basilisk - Central America

The plumed basilisk is a member of the iguana family. It is about two feet long and bright green in color. It eats leaves and prefers tree limbs that hang over water. If it is frightened or attacked, it races to the water so fast that it can raise up on its hind legs and actually run across the surface for about 20 feet before sinking and swimming to safety. The female lays eggs in a hole dug in the ground, covers them with leaves, and does not return.

crocodile - Africa

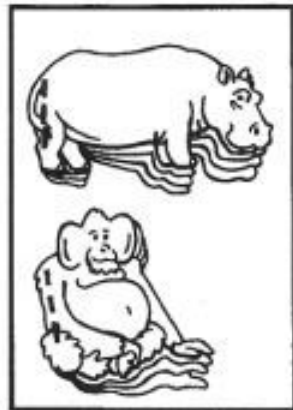
Although the crocodile spends a lot of time feeding and floating in rivers like an amphibian, it is actually a reptile. It has thick, scaled skin and lays eggs in a nest on land. Some crocodiles stay with the nest to protect the eggs. A crocodile has a large mouth and an appetite to go with it. A young crocodile feeds on insects, crabs, and shrimp. As it gets bigger it feeds on fish, birds and small mammals. As an adult, it may eat almost anything, including large antelopes or zebras that might come to the river to drink. They grow to 23 feet in length and have been known to attack and eat humans.



rainforest book

Making a Large Fact or Fiction Book

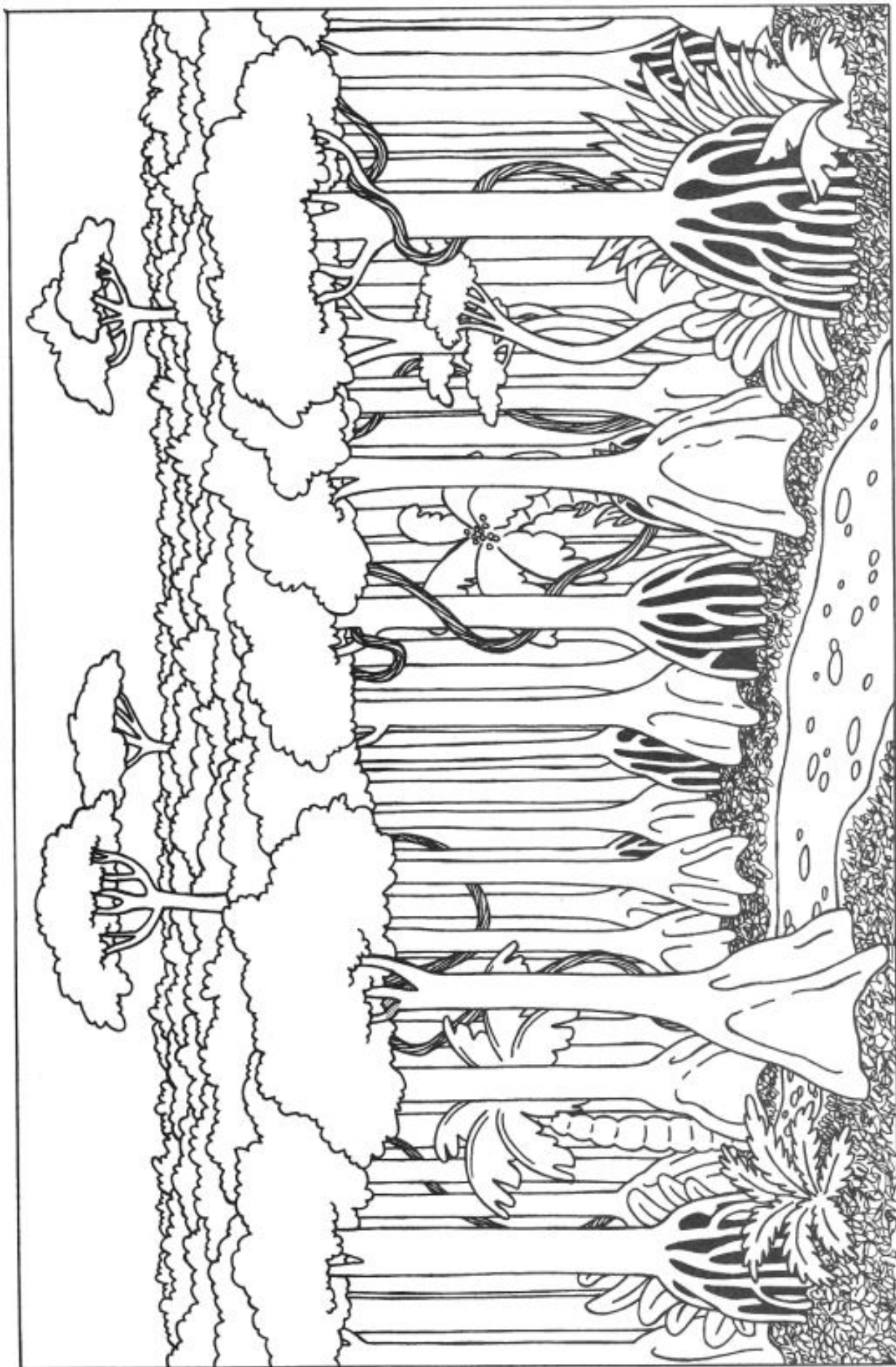
1. Reproduce the page 81 mural for each child to be used as the cover of the book. Let the children color and decorate their covers.
2. Distribute three or four pieces of story book style lined paper to each child.
3. The children can use patterns from this book or draw their own illustrations and create factual reports or fictional stories.
4. Let each child gather the pages for his story or report in order and place his cover on top. Assist each child in stapling the pages and cover together along the left side.



large shape book

Making a Large Shape Book

1. Reproduce a large animal pattern (like the elephant) or enlarge any of the smaller animal patterns to 11" x 17" size and reproduce one pattern for each child. Let the children color and decorate their animals. These will be the covers of the books.
2. Let the children use the cover to trace and cut out the book shape on several pieces of lined storybook paper.
3. Let the children write their stories or reports on the lined paper sheets.
4. Gather the pages, position the cover on top, and staple together on the left.



Tropical Rainforest Mural

This mural shows the forest floor (including a stream), the understory, and the canopy with the emergent trees. This page can be used with the activities on pages five through ten.