

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

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

Lesson 08.01: Quote: The Rainy Rain Forest

Reading: The Rainy Rain Forest Text

## The Rainy Rain Forest Text

Read the text below. Remember to keep the topic of the importance of water in mind while reading.

### The Rainy Rain Forest Written by: Devin Myers

#### The Hoh Rain Forest

The Hoh Rain Forest is part of Olympic National Park. Located in the temperate zone, one of the four major climate zones, it is one of the largest temperate rainforests in the United States. Temperate forests have moist conditions that generally support mosses, ferns, and a variety of broadleaf and mixed trees. Olympic National Park is in northwestern Washington State, which is known for being one of the wettest places in America. Since the Hoh Rain Forest is part of a national park, it is protected from commercial and residential development.

The rain forest runs along the Hoh River, which originates at the Hoh Glacier, flows through the mountains and forests of the park, and eventually empties into the Pacific Ocean. In 1976, Olympic National Park was awarded the distinction of World Heritage Site, which has helped to ensure the preservation of its unique biological ecosystems, including the Hoh Rain Forest. These systems are vital for the animals and plant life to survive. For instance, elk and deer rely on the lettuce lichen that grows in the cool, moist conditions of the rainforest's canopy.

#### Climate

When rainstorms come in from the Pacific Ocean, the Olympic Mountains are the first to get wet. The air of incoming storms rises along the mountain slopes and then cools, which produces precipitation—a lot of precipitation! The Hoh Rain Forest, on the other hand, does not experience such dramatic variation in temperatures. Its moderate climate is protected by the coastal mountain ranges. The unique climate of the park relies on the Olympic Mountains. The park experiences an immense amount of rainfall each year, the majority of which falls between April and September.

On average, the Hoh Rain Forest receives 140–167 inches of rain per year. That is almost 13 feet of rain! The consistent rain keeps the forest lush, green, and slippery all year. Due to extreme variations in elevation, the weather can vary unpredictably between different areas of Olympic National Park. Different weather conditions often exist at the same time within the park. The temperatures of areas that are close to one another can vary by 10–20 degrees, depending on their elevation. The thick canopy of the rain forest moderates the temperature year-round and provides the perfect habitat for wildlife and vegetation.

#### Animals

There are three ecosystems within Olympic National Park that are home to a variety of animals. Perhaps the most interesting animal of all is the banana slug. Banana slugs are the second-largest species of land slug in the world. They can grow up to 10 inches long and weigh a quarter of a pound. You will also find tree frogs, owls, bobcats, cougars, raccoons, black bears, and deer, who rely on the rich rainfall forest to provide food and the environment for their survival needs. In fact, Hoh Rain Forest is home to the largest wild population of Roosevelt elk in the United States. Some animals in the park, such as the spotted owl, the bull trout, and the gray wolf are protected under the

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Endangered Species Act. Some species are heavily reliant on the old-growth forest of the rain forest. Without this environment, they would struggle to survive. Already, the spotted owls are vulnerable to starvation and decline due to the loss of suitable habitats. Others rely on both land and the ocean, such as the marbled murrelet, which nests in old-growth trees at night but feeds in the ocean during the day.

### Plants

Olympic National Park is known for its diverse old-growth forest. The most common types of trees in the park's rainforest are the Sitka spruce and the western hemlock, which thrive in mild climates with high annual rainfall and cool, wet summers. These trees can grow to be more than 300 feet tall and seven feet in diameter. Most of the trees in the rain forest are covered in clumps of hanging moss and ferns. Moss is a plant that grows on another plant without harming it. Moss gets its moisture and nutrients from the air, rain, fog, and debris that accumulates around it.

The trees and plant life in the old-growth forest thrive on the large amounts of rain the forest receives. Without this rainfall, these trees and plant life would struggle and eventually die. For instance, the Sitka spruce needs a minimum of 1,000 mm of yearly rainfall and can't tolerate a dry climate. Century-old cedars, spruce, and fir trees can also be found here. In the Hoh Rain Forest, old growth creates new life. New plants and trees sprout from old, dead logs called "nurse logs" and other organic matter in the undergrowth of the forest. When large trees fall and start to decay, they provide an important habitat for mosses, tree seedlings, fungi, amphibians, and insects. Moss lives in the tree branches without ever touching the ground. The result is a wonderful biodiversity featuring many different, interconnected forms of life.

The Hoh Rain Forest is a unique ecosystem within Olympic National Park. As a national park, its unique ecosystem is protected. The result is biodiversity that is able to thrive with minimal human intervention. The climate, which includes immense amounts of rainfall, results in one of the world's lushest rainforests and a true wonder of Washington State.

### Glossary

- Temperate-having a moderate climate which especially lacks extremes in temperature
- Rain Forest-a tropical woodland with an annual rainfall of at least 100 inches and marked by lofty, broadleaf evergreen trees forming a continuous canopy
- Biodiversity-an environment with numbers of different species of plants and animals Ecosystem-a complex community of organisms and its environment as an ecological unit
- Amphibians-a cold-blooded vertebrate of a class that is comprised of frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders Habitat-the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism