

Ashley's Awesome Amazon Adventure!

Materials Needed:

- Large blue construction paper or a blue tablecloth (for the river base)
- Green and brown construction paper (for land and trees)
- Play-Doh or modeling clay in various colors (for animals, plants) OR Crayons, colored pencils, markers
- Child-safe scissors
- Glue stick
- Parent/Teacher-sourced: Pictures or short, age-appropriate video clips of Amazon River animals (e.g., pink river dolphin, piranha, anaconda, macaw, poison dart frog, capybara)
- Optional: Craft supplies like pipe cleaners, googly eyes, feathers, fabric scraps
- Optional: A large tray or shallow box (if making a 3D diorama)

Lesson Plan:

Introduction: Welcome to the Amazon! (Engage - About 10 minutes)

Hi Ashley! Today we're going on an exciting adventure to one of the most amazing places on Earth – the Amazon River! Have you ever heard of it? What do you imagine when you think of a giant river in a rainforest?

(Teacher: Show a picture or a very short video clip of the Amazon River itself, perhaps showing its vastness or a boat journeying on it.)

The Amazon River is incredible! It's not just a long stretch of water; it's the largest river by the amount of water it carries in the world, and the rainforest around it, the Amazon Rainforest, is home to more types of animals and plants than almost anywhere else on Earth. Let's dive in and learn more!

Discovering Amazon Creatures (Explore/Explain - About 15 minutes)

The Amazon is teeming with fascinating animals! Let's meet some of them.

(Teacher: Show pictures or short clips of 3-5 different Amazon animals. For each, share its name and one cool fact, especially an adaptation – a special feature or behavior that helps it live in the Amazon.)

- **Pink River Dolphin:** Did you know some dolphins in the Amazon are pink? They use echolocation (like sonar) to find fish in the muddy river water because it's hard to see! That's a neat adaptation.
- **Piranha:** Famous for their sharp teeth! While they have a scary reputation, most piranhas eat fish, insects, fruits, and seeds that fall into the water. Their sharp teeth are an adaptation for their diet.
- **Anaconda:** One of the world's largest snakes! They are amazing swimmers and can hold their breath for a long time. This adaptation helps them hunt in and around the water.
- **Macaw:** These are big, bright, colorful parrots! Their strong, curved beaks are perfectly adapted for cracking open hard nuts and seeds found in the rainforest.
- **Poison Dart Frog:** Tiny but so vibrant! Their bright colors are an adaptation to warn predators that they are poisonous and not good to eat.

Which of these animals do you find the most interesting or surprising, Ashley? Why? Can you remember one animal and its special adaptation?

Creating Your Own Amazon World (Elaborate/Create - About 25-30 minutes)

Now for the super fun part! You get to be an artist and scientist and create your very own piece of the Amazon River and rainforest.

You can choose how you want to create it:

Option 1: Make a 3D Model or Diorama

- Use the large blue paper as your Amazon River. You can lay it flat on a table or inside a tray or shallow box.
- Use green and brown construction paper to make the land beside the river and some tall rainforest trees. You can cut or tear the paper and glue it on.
- Now, using Play-Doh or modeling clay, sculpt at least one Amazon animal we talked about (or another you like that lives there). Think about its shape, colors, and any special features (adaptations) it has.
- Don't forget the plants! What kinds of plants, like big leaves, vines, or river plants, might be there? Create some with your clay or paper.
- Arrange your animal(s) and plant(s) in your Amazon scene. Where would they live? In the water? On a branch? On the forest floor?

Option 2: Draw or Paint an Amazon Scene

- On a large piece of paper, draw or paint a vibrant scene of the Amazon River cutting through the rainforest.
- Include at least one Amazon animal we discussed. Show it in its habitat – maybe it's swimming, flying, or resting on a tree. Try to show one of its adaptations if you can!
- Add lots of Amazon plants! Think about how lush and green the rainforest is, with tall trees, flowers, and vines.

(Teacher: As Ashley works, encourage her creativity and ask guiding questions: "Tell me about the animal you're making. What does it eat? How does its color help it? What kind of plants are important for your animal?")

Amazon Showcase! (Evaluate/Extend - About 5-10 minutes)

Ashley, your Amazon creation is wonderful! Let's have a little showcase. Can you tell me about what you made?

- Which Amazon animal(s) did you decide to feature in your scene? Can you name three animals that live in the Amazon?
- Pick one animal you created. Can you tell me about one special adaptation it has that helps it live in the Amazon? (e.g., "My pink river dolphin uses echolocation to find food.")
- What kinds of plants did you include? Why do you think plants are important in the Amazon ecosystem?
- What was your favorite part about exploring the Amazon River today? Is there anything else you'd like to learn about it?

Adventure Wrap-up

You did an amazing job today becoming an Amazon explorer and creator, Ashley! You learned about some incredible animals and how they live, and you made a beautiful representation of their home. The Amazon is a precious place, and it's great that you're curious about it!