

## *Razing the rainforest*

### Teachers' notes

#### Lesson1: Razing the rainforest – sources of deforestation

The key to successfully executing this lesson is to give students the freedom to generate their own ideas, while at the same time manage those ideas so that the class remain focused on the five most commonly recognised sources of deforestation: subsistence farming, commercial logging, infrastructure development, commercial agriculture and cattle ranching.

Students need to work in groups throughout the lesson. Group composition can be decided upon by the teacher so that there is a range of abilities within each group.

#### **The Starter:**

It can be assumed the students will already have a certain level of understanding about the sources of deforestation, so the first task gets them to focus on this and listen to the ideas of their peers. Students should be given large pieces of paper on which to brainstorm. They should show development of their ideas by adding more 'branches' to their mind maps. Some teachers may wish to distribute atlases to support students' locational knowledge. After five minutes, students should be invited to share their ideas with the rest of the class. The teacher should ask the class which five sources they regard as the most important and list these on the board. It is likely that the class will identify the top five sources, but in the event they don't, the teacher should suggest them. If, during the mind mapping activity one of the top five sources had not been identified, the teacher should question students and lead them to the missing source.

#### **The Main activity:**

This activity is an excellent way of getting students to practice a range of skills. Not only must they extract and interpret information, but they also need to show a high level of understanding in order to teach their peers. Group size can be from pairs to groups of four.

Once each group has been told which source they are investigating, students work together to produce a summary on sugar paper. It is essential that they write in bullet points as when they start 'teaching' they are not allowed to just read information from the sheet; the bullet points are just prompts. All of the sheets should take the same format and information needs to be put under the headings of: **The source of deforestation, Why it occurs, Where it occurs and The consequences**. These headings should be given to students at the beginning of the activity, BEFORE they start the task. Students are told that they are going to teach each other about the different sources and by the end of the task, they will have taught about sources they did not research themselves. Groups move around the room taking it in turns to be 'experts' and learners (**see lesson plan for logistics**). By the end of the activity, all students will have had a number of opportunities to be both the expert and the learner.

During the task, students will be 'teaching' about a source they did not originally research themselves, so it is vital that they listen to their peers and understand what is being taught. The potential disadvantage of this task is that as information is passed from student to student, it becomes 'watered down' or factually incorrect. It is therefore essential that the teacher circulates at all times, listening to what students are saying and intervening if and when necessary. Students should be reminded to use the correct vocabulary and give detailed and extended answers.

#### **The Plenary:**

At the end of the task, students work in their groups to make notes under the original headings for the four sources of deforestation they did not originally research. The plenary provides time for the teacher to make sure that the correct information has been delivered and gained. Each source should be addressed in turn by the class as a whole, with time for students to make notes.