# Assignment Summary

For this assignment, you will conduct research and evaluate how various roads that have been built in rainforests impact people and the Earth. Based on your research and evaluation, you will write a position paper expressing whether you are for or against the building of roads in rainforests. Then, you will share and discuss with your classmates your position.

Background Information

Even if you live far away from rainforests, these ecosystems are important to you—and to the entire planet. They are important to the well-being of our planet. Because rainforests are so large, their trees produce a lot of oxygen that ensures the survival of many species. They also take in huge amounts of carbon dioxide, which can reduce or maintain levels of global warming. Rainforests provide a home for many unique plants and animals. Additionally, the rainfall that rainforest receive helps maintain the water cycle for the entire planet. Rainforests are also a source for medicine and foods—the products of the rainforest sustain the people who live there. They are a great place to visit, too! So how might building roads in these crucial ecosystems affect the rainforests—and beyond?

Materials

* Internet access
* Word-processing software

# Assignment Instructions

For this assignment, you are expected to submit three things:

1. Graphic organizer
2. Position paper
3. Class discussion evaluation

**Step 1: Prepare for the assignment.**

1. Read through the guide before you begin so you know the expectations for this assignment.
2. If there is anything that is unclear, be sure to ask your teacher.

**Step 2: Research the impact road construction has on rainforest ecosystems.**

1. Search the Internet for resources about rainforests and the impact of building roads in these ecosystems. Reliable resources include
   1. The National Geographic Society.
   2. The Rainforest Alliance.
   3. The World Wildlife Federation.
   4. The Rainforest Action Network.
   5. The Rainforest Trust.

You might also search for maps that show areas of rainforests before and after deforestation and other statistics about the disappearance of the rainforest and the effects of its disappearance.

You should also search for the positive aspects of creating roads in the rainforests and how the economy may be improved by building roads into very remote areas.

1. Take notes that consider the following:
2. Food and products that come from the rainforest
3. Effect of transportation on peoples who live in the rainforest as well as the effect of transportation on tourism
4. Effect of deforestation on rainforests and on the entire planet

**Step 3: Complete the evaluation chart.**

1. Consult your notes to figure out how building a road in a rainforest might affect people, groups, or parts of the Earth. Record the effects in the first column of the chart in **Part One** of this guide.
2. In the second column of the chart, decide whether the effect is positive or negative. Explain why.

**Step 4: Complete the position paper.**

1. Take a look at your chart. Think about whether a road should be built through the rainforest.
2. Write a two-paragraph paper highlighting your position in the space provided in **Part Two** of this guide.
   1. Be sure your argument is supported by evidence from your research.
   2. If you are in favor, suggest ways to protect and monitor the rainforest even while roads are being built. If you are opposed, suggest other ways businesses and native people could profit from the rainforest without causing harm to it.

**Step 5: Participate in a group discussion.**

1. Read the general guidelines for the group discussion outlined in **Part Three** of this guide.
2. Prepare for the group discussion.
3. Take turns in your group talking about your position papers.
4. Give the reasons to support your position.
5. Think together: What arguments could be made **against** our positions? Discuss those ideas together.
6. Evaluate the discussion by responding to the short-answer prompts and questions in **Part Three** of this guide.

**Step 6: Evaluate your assignment using this checklist.**

If you can check each box below, you are ready to submit your assignment.

* Did you research the effects of building roads through the rainforest on different groups of people and on the rainforest itself?
* Did you record your research in the chart in **Part One** of this guide?
* Did you evaluate whether the building of roads in the rainforest is a positive or negative effect for each group? Did you record these ideas in the chart in **Part One** of this guide?
* Did you write a position paper that includes evidence to support your idea in **Part Two** of this guide?
* Did you include in your position paper ways to lessen the impact of your claim?
* Is your position paper at least 2 paragraphs with complete sentences that are free from spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammatical errors?
* Did you consider the alternative point of view and think about the other “side” of the argument?
* Did you participate in the group discussion?
* Did you evaluate the group discussion by answering the prompts and questions in **Part Three** of this guide?

**Step 7: Revise and submit your assignment.**

1. If you were unable to check off all of the requirements on the checklist, go back and make sure that your assignment is complete. Save your assignment before submitting it.
2. When you have completed your assignment, return to the Virtual Classroom and use the “Add files” option to locate and submit your assignment. Ask your teacher for assistance if necessary.
3. Congratulations! You have completed your assignment.

Part One: Graphic Organizer

For this assignment, you will take a close look at your research, and then summarize ideas about the question: *Should we build roads in the rainforests?*

1. Use the table to record the effect of building roads in the rainforest. Consider the effects on each group or part of Earth affected.
2. For each group or part that is affected, decide whether the effect of building the roads is positive or negative. Record that information in the chart.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Who or what is affected?** | **How will building a road through the rainforest affect the people or system?** | **Is the effect positive, negative, or both? Explain why.** |
| People who live in the rainforest |  |  |
| Rainforest ecosystem |  |  |
| Plants and animals |  |  |
| Earth’s climate |  |  |
| Logging companies |  |  |
| Tourists |  |  |

Part Two: Position Paper

What’s your position about building roads in the rainforest? Write a paper that explains your position. Use facts from your research to support your position. How would humans and different parts of Earth be affected by the construction? Is there any argument **against** your position? You should write two paragraphs. One paragraph gives background about the problem, and the other tells your position and supports it. Your work should be free from spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammatical errors.

Part Three: Group Discussion and Evaluation

General guidelines for group discussion:

* Prepare for the group discussion by reviewing the notes from your research, your graphic organizer, and your position paper.
* Think of a question you could pose to the group that would help you understand more about why they took the position they did.
* Be respectful of your group members, listening carefully when they speak and asking good follow-up questions.
* Encourage all group members to participate. You don’t need to read your papers to each other. Instead, summarize the most important points.
* Take notes during the discussion to help you respond to the prompts that follow.

To evaluate your discussion, answer the following prompts and questions. Responses should be two to three complete sentences that are free from spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammatical errors.

1. Describe a time in the group discussion when you referred to the notes you took, the graphic organizer you filled out, and your position paper.
2. Describe a time in the group discussion when someone cited evidence from their research to make a point.
3. Describe a time in the group discussion when someone provided an argument against your position. What arguments could be made **against** your position?
4. Explain how the graphic organizer helped you formulate your decision and participate in the discussion.