

# How to Save a Baby Orangutan

Rescuing an orphaned baby orangutan in the rainforest of Borneo

## About the Story

**Lexile:** 980L (combined)

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

## Learning Objective:

to synthesize information from a nonfiction article and an infographic about the causes and effects of rainforest destruction

## Key Skills:

key ideas and details, tone, synthesis

## Essential Questions:

- Why are rainforests valuable?
- How do humans affect the natural world?
- Why should we care about things that happen in faraway places?

## Standards:

The articles and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: **R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.7, R.9, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.5, L.6.** For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.

**How to Save a Baby Orangutan**  
When a baby orangutan was left for dead in the rainforest, a team of humans raced to save him.  
By Mackenzie Carr

**5 WAYS Orangutans Are Just**

- 1 They are intelligent. When it's time to eat, they use tools to get the food.
- 2 They communicate. They use a variety of sounds and gestures to talk to each other.
- 3 They are curious. They explore their surroundings and learn from their mistakes.
- 4 They are social. They live in groups and care for each other.
- 5 They are resilient. They can survive in the wild despite many challenges.

**RAINFORESTS**  
The world's rainforests are disappearing. Here's why we have to save them.

**THE NUMBERS**

- 50 percent of all plant and animal species on Earth live in rainforests.
- 40 percent of the air we breathe is produced by trees and plants in rainforests.
- 39 million acres of tropical rainforest were destroyed in 2017.

**TOP THREATS**

- Deforestation
- Climate change
- Poaching
- Pollution
- Fire

**WHAT RAINFORESTS PROVIDE**

- Medicine
- Food
- Water
- Energy
- Climate regulation
- Biodiversity

## Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of materials at [scope.scholastic.com](https://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- The article
- Vocabulary

**Literature Connections:** ideas for connecting to curricular texts

### Skill Builders to print or project:

- Vocabulary
- Preparing to Write: The Value of Rainforests
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- **Core Skills Workout:** Text Evidence\*, Text Structure, Tone
- Quiz\*
- Contest Entry Form

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

## Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

### 1 Preparing to Read

#### Do-Now: Respond to a Quote

(3 minutes)

Write the following on the board for students to respond to in their writing journals as they enter the classroom: *"We have forgotten how to be good guests, how to walk gently on Earth as its other creatures do."*—Barbara Ward, economist. *What do you think Ward meant? Do you agree?*

#### Preview vocabulary.

(10 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions**. Highlighted words: *deforestation, dispatched, ecosystems, habitat, malnutrition, primatologist, stabilized, voracious*

### 2 Reading and Discussing

#### "How to Save a Baby Orangutan"

(30 minutes, activity sheets online)

- Read aloud the As You Read box on page 16.
- Read the article as a class. Optionally, play the audio from Scope Online. Discuss the following questions as a class.

#### Close-Reading Questions

Why can't young orangutans survive in the wild without their mothers? (key ideas and details) *Young orangutans cannot survive alone in the wild because for the first seven or so years of their lives, orangutans are "completely dependent" on their mothers (17). It takes years for young orangutans to learn critical survival skills, so if they are on their own, they might, for example, starve to death or be killed by predators.*

What attitude toward orangutans and rainforests does author Mackenzie Carro express in her article? (tone) *Carro expresses*

*concern for orangutans and rainforests. She describes the death of Gerhana's mother as a "disaster" and writes that "sadly," it is not uncommon for an orangutan to be killed by hunters (16). She also writes, "As much as the Forest School is doing for orangutans, the problem is bigger than the school can solve on its own" (18), presenting the threat to orangutans as a problem that should be solved. In addition, Carro paraphrases Dr. Signe Preuschoft's statement that rainforests contain "thousands of other important plants and animals" (18). Carro does not disagree, so you can infer that she, too, believes rainforests are valuable and should be protected.*

#### "Why We Need Rainforests"

(15 minutes, activity sheets online)

- Give students several minutes to study the infographic.
- As a class, discuss the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions, some of which draw on both the article and the infographic.

#### Close-Reading Question

Preuschoft says that if we protect the rainforest for orangutans, we will also "protect thousands of other important plants and animals" (18). How does information in the infographic "Why We Need Rainforests" support Preuschoft's claim? (synthesis) *The infographic states that 50 percent of all plant and animal species on Earth live in rainforests, which supports the idea that protecting rainforests will protect many species. The infographic also states that rainforests absorb carbon dioxide, produce many of the foods and flavorings we eat, and are a habitat for plants used to treat cancer. All these facts support the idea that plants in the rainforest are "important."*

▶ **Briefly explain what the infographic is about.** (key ideas) *It explains why rainforests are important and highlights some of the threats that they face.*

### **Critical-Thinking Questions**

▶ **Consider the sidebar “5 Ways Orangutans Are Just Like Us.” Why might the author or editors have included this sidebar? Does it affect your feelings about orangutans?** *Students might suggest that the sidebar was included to encourage readers’ concern for or interest in orangutans. Or they might say that the sidebar simply adds interesting information about orangutans that is not in the article. Answers about the sidebar’s effect will vary.*

▶ **Imagine that “How to Save a Baby Orangutan” were turned into an infographic. How would the experience of reading the infographic compare with the experience of reading the article?** *If the article were turned into an infographic, it would contain a lot less detail and would likely not be presented as a narrative. Students might say that an infographic about Gerhana’s rescue and orangutans in Borneo would not have the same emotional impact that the article has.*

▶ **Would you want to work at the Forest School as a caregiver to young orangutans? Why or why not?** *Answers will vary.*

▶ **The article says that one way to help orangutans is by asking companies to use palm oil that is produced in a way that does not harm rainforests. Brainstorm other ways that kids might be able to help orangutans.** *Ideas might include: reducing consumption of processed foods and products; raising awareness about the effects of logging, mining, ranching, and farming in the rainforest; supporting environmental organizations; and supporting politicians who fight for rainforest protection.*

• Revisit the quote from the Do-Now. Discuss how it applies to orangutans and rainforests.

## **3 Skill Building and Writing**

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students complete the activity **Preparing to Write: The Value of Rainforests**. This synthesizing activity will prepare them for the writing prompt on page 19. *For alternate culminating tasks, see below.*

## **Differentiate and Customize**

### **For Struggling Readers**

In a well-organized paragraph, name two ways in which rainforests are important and describe two threats they face. Use details from the article and the infographic in your answer.

### **For Advanced Readers**

Why are rainforests an important part of our environment, and why should they be protected? Answer in an essay, drawing on the article, the infographic, and two other sources.

### **For Creative Writers**

Retell Gerhana’s story from his point of view. Imagine how he must have felt and what he must have thought about his experiences.

### **For Journalists**

Imagine that you are a journalist and you’re going to interview Dr. Signe Preuschoft about her work with orangutans at the Four Paws Forest School. Make a list of questions you will ask her.