

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

Welcome to Jungle School!

Today is your chance to experience what it's like to be a young orangutan living in the Sumatran jungle, as described in my book
What A Wonderful World.

- You'll learn about what's happening to the orangutans' rainforest homes.
- You'll find out what skills an orangutan needs to survive in the wild.
- You'll get to know Grandfather of the Orangutan, Dr Peter Pratje, who has spent 20 years helping orphaned orangutans return to a life in the wild.

Let's get started . . .

1: How much does your classroom or home look like a jungle?

The Bukit Tigapuluh is a remote and wild place – a rainforest found in the centre of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It's hilly, covered in a tangle of plants and home to species found nowhere else on Earth, including Sumatran elephants and tigers and clouded leopards. You could make your room look like the Bukit Tigapuluh, by draping green blankets over the furniture, bringing in houseplants, hanging streamers for vines and hiding your toys as wildlife.

2: Time to head into the jungle . . .

Imagine what it *feels* like in the jungle – it's swelteringly hot. What would you wear as you slosh through streams and slip down slopes?

How does the jungle *sound*? There's the constant drone of buzzing insects, the "wooo-hoo-hoo-hoo-wa-wa" of gibbons and a chorus of croaking frogs.

You walk into a little clearing next to a stream. There are wooden huts dotted about and walking towards you is Dr Peter Pratje. Peter has lived here for over 20 years helping more than 170 orphaned orangutans return to a life in the wild.



Why are orangutans orphaned?

Many young orangutans are separated from their mothers as the rainforest is cleared or burned to make way for oil palm crops. Oil palm fruits are turned into cheap vegetable oil, found in around half of all supermarket packaged products – from biscuits and chocolate to shampoo and pizza. The rainforest is also being cleared for crops such as rubber trees and corn. Alarmingly, experts at the United Nations believe that 98 per cent of natural rainforest in Indonesia could be destroyed by 2022.

If you'd like to help, you can write to your local supermarket and ask that the products it sells only use sustainable palm oil, grown in a way that doesn't destroy the rainforests.

3: What's that noise?

Suddenly, branches crack overhead. There's a flash of orange fur moving through the trees, and a bellowing call echoes out. . .

. . . the orangutans have arrived for
JUNGLE SCHOOL!

What sound do you think an orangutan makes?

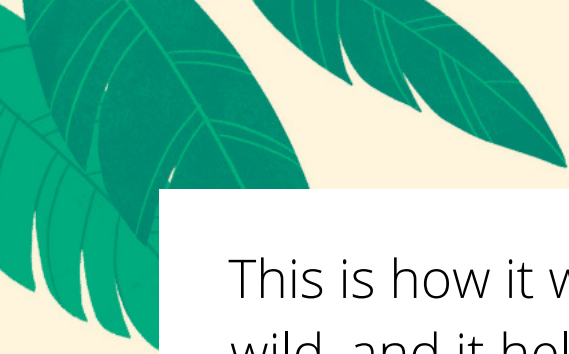
4: Now imagine that YOU are an orangutan . . .

. . . your school day is about to begin.

It starts with breakfast at 8am.

Sometimes the orangutans get a food parcel wrapped in a banana leaf. Other times, breakfast is hidden so that the orangutans must find it.

Peter says: "We try to make it a bit difficult for the orangutans – like a puzzle to solve."



This is how it would be for the orangutans in the wild, and it helps them to see the forest as food.


Can you find breakfast hiding somewhere in your room?




At 10am it's time for the orangutans to get a piggyback into the jungle so they can begin to experience the sights, smells and sounds of life in the forest.

Peter and his volunteers help orphaned orangutans to develop skills they would have learnt from their mothers. Importantly, the orangutans learn from doing and imitating – they're not "taught".

Perhaps an adult can show YOU how to do it?

Okay little orangutans, get ready to. . .

- **Climb trees.** Sometimes Peter helps the orangutans practice on ropes, why don't you try safely climbing and swinging in the playground or garden?
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- **Build a comfy sleeping nest.** Orangutans are excellent engineers; they bend and break branches and weave them into a nest shape in the trees high above ground. They even use branches as a blanket!
 - **Eat vines!** Vines are important food for the orangutans from November to February when fruiting season has ended. They learn to peel back the bark on thorny rattan vines to eat the goodness inside.
 - **Suck on termites.** Orangutans learn to break open termite mounds to get at the tasty insects inside. They sometimes use sticks to do this. Once the top of the nest is open, suck the termites out – YUM!
 - **Make friends.** Meet and play with other orangutans.

I hope you enjoyed being an orangutan for the day!

You can meet the Jungle School orangutans for yourself and find out more about their school day at:

<https://sumatra.fzs.org/en/orang-utan-conservation-rehabilitation-jungle-school>

Share your experience as an orangutan with me at:

Twitter: @Leisa_Stewart

Instagram: @leisastewartsharpe

www.leisastewartsharpe.com

And get your copy of What a Wonderful World so you can become an Earth Shaker too at:

<https://smarturl.it/WonderfulWorldBook>



I'm Leisa Stewart-Sharpe and my book 'What a Wonderful World', illustrated by Lydia Hill, is out now! What a Wonderful World whisks budding conservationists (8+) off on a tour of our planet – from steamy jungles and towering mountaintops to great polar wildernesses. Along the way they learn about what's happening to our planet and meet 35 Earth Shakers who are standing up for nature. Best of all, the book is jam-packed with practical tips that young people can put into action today. I hope you enjoy it!

