



ECOLOGY VOCABULARY

 *refers to those vocabulary terms which are used in our online curriculum*

Abiotic—Nonliving factors in the environment. The abiotic factors of the environment include light, temperature, soil, climate, and atmospheric gases. 

Adaptation—Changes in an organisms' physiological structure or function or habits that allow it to survive in new surroundings.

Autotroph—An organism capable of synthesizing its own food from inorganic substances using light or chemical energy. Green plants, algae, and some bacteria are **autotrophs**.

Biology—The study of life and living organisms. This includes their physical and chemical structure, function, development and evolution.

Biomimicry—The copying or imitation of a natural phenomenon's or environment's efficiency and survival mechanisms.

Biotic—Living factors in the environment. 

Camouflage—An adaptation that allows organisms to blend in with certain aspects of it's environment.

Carnivore—An organism that eats meat for energy.

Changes—Differences or disturbances of the environment caused by human influences and natural ecological processes. Environmental **changes** include natural disasters, human interferences, or animal interaction. 

Community—The region occupied by a group of interacting organisms.

Commensalism—A symbiotic relationship between organisms of different species in which one organism is benefited and the other is unaffected.

Competition—The struggle between two organisms for the same resources (food, water, shelter, light, territory, etc.) within an environment. Competition among members of different species is called intraspecific competition; competition among members of the same species is called interspecific competition.

Consumer—An organism that consumes another organism as food for energy. **Primary consumer**: an organism that consumes producers (usually plants). **Secondary consumer**: an organism that consumes primary consumers.

Crepuscular—Appearing or active in the dawn or dusk.

Cycle—A natural process in which elements are continuously moved in various forms between different components of the environment. Examples include the energy, water, rock, and nutrient cycles. 

Decomposer—An organism that breaks down organic material.

Diurnal—Active by daylight, sleep at night.

Diversity—The degree of variation of living things present in a particular ecosystem.

Ecology— The study of how living (biotic) and nonliving (abiotic) parts of the environment interact with each other. 

Ecosystem—A system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their physical environment. 

Environment—The total of all of the surroundings – air, water, vegetation, human element, wildlife – that has influence on you and your existence, including physical, biological and all other factors; the surroundings of a plant or animal including other plants and animals, climate and location.

Exotic—Refers to a foreign plant or animal – one that has been introduced into a new area.

Extinction—The dying out or termination of a species.

Food Chain—An interconnected chain of organisms related to energy transfer that indicates which are predators and which are prey in relation to one another.

Food Web— A network of interconnected food chains in an ecological community.

Habitat— The natural environment of a plant or animal.

Herbivore—An organism that eats plants for energy.

Inhabitable—A place that can support the life and growth of an organism.

Interdependence—The interrelationships of wildlife with one another and with the various elements of their environment. 🖨

Invasive Species—Species that are non-native to an ecosystem and whose presence causes economic harm, environmental harm, and/or harm to human health.

Mutualism—A symbiotic relationship between organisms in which both organisms are benefited, and could even be dependent on one another.

Niche—The ecological role of an organism in a community.

Nocturnal—Active by night; sleep during the day.

Omnivore—An organism that eats both plants and meat for energy.

Organism—Any living thing that has living characteristics and is composed of one or more cells.

Parasitism— A symbiotic relationship between organisms in which one organism benefits (the **parasite**) and the other is harmed (the **host**).

Photosynthesis—The process by which green plants produce their food (carbohydrates) from water, carbon dioxide, and minerals, using the sun's energy.

Population—All the organisms that constitute a specific group or occur in a specified habitat.

Predator—An animal that naturally preys on other animals.

Prey—Animals that are killed and eaten by other animals.

Producer— An organism that uses the sun's energy for producing food.

Species— Organisms that can reproduce with each other.

Symbiosis—Any relationship between two or more organisms in which the organisms somehow affect each other.

System—Physical and biological materials and their intertwined processes. Natural systems exist in nature without any human involvement.

Trophic level—A group of organisms that occupy the same position in a food chain.

Zonation—The natural layering of ecosystems that occurs at distinct altitudes due to varying environmental conditions.