

Abiotic Factors	Non-living factors including temperature, water, sunlight, wind, rocks and soil
Biotic Factors	Living things in an ecosystem
Carbon Cycle	The organic circulation of carbon from the atmosphere into organisms and back again
Carnivores	Consumers that eat only animals
Carrying Capacity	Largest number of individuals of a population that a environment can support
Cellular Respiration	Process that releases energy by breaking down food molecules in the presence of oxygen:
Climax Community	A stable, mature community that undergoes little or no change in species over time.
Commensalism	A close relationship; one species benefits, the other doesn't benefit but isn't harmed
Communities	Different populations that live together in a defined area
Competition	Interaction in which two or more species use the same limited resource

Consumer	Organisms that take in food material and are above producers on the energy pyramid
Decomposers	organisms that break down wastes and dead organisms and return raw materials to the environment
Desert	Rainfall less than 9.9 inches per year
Ecological Succession	The gradual and orderly process of change in an ecosystem brought about by the progressive replacement of one community by another until a stable climax is established
Ecosystems	All the living and non-living things that interact in an area.
Exponential Growth	Occurs when the individuals in a population reproduce at a constant rate
Food Chain	A series of steps in which organisms transfer energy by eating and being eaten User-
Food Web	Shows how food chains are related within an ecosystem
Fundamental Niche	Niche where an organism is actually able to live
Generation Time	Average time between one generation of offspring and the next

Grasslands	Prairies, steppes, pampas, veldts; near the equator, characterized by treeless areas and tall grasses.
Growth Rate	Rate of increase or decrease of a population
Habitats	Places where animals or plants naturally live and grow
Herbivores	Consumers that eat only plants
Invasive Species	Species that enter new ecosystems and multiply, harming native species and their habitats
Levels of ecological organization	Groups of organisms at progressive levels
Limiting Resource	A short supply of resources restricting the growth of a population
Mutualism	A close relationship; both species benefit
Nitrogen Cycle	The cycle in which nitrogen gas is changed into forms of nitrogen that plants can use
Omnivores	A consumer that eats both plants and animals

Organisms	Any living thing
Parasitism	A close relationship; one species benefits, the other is harmed
Permafrost	Permanently frozen layer of soil under the surface
Phosphorus Cycle	The process by which phosphorus is recycled in the ecosystem
Photosynthesis	Autotrophs convert light energy into chemical energy
Pioneer Species	The first species to live in an area of primary succession
Population	A group of organisms of the same species populating a given area
Potential Niche	The entire range of resource opportunities an organism is potentially able to occupy within an ecosystem
Primary Succession	The series of changes that occur in an area where no ecosystem previously existed
Producer	Organism that can make their own food

Reproductive Potential	Rate at which a species can increase population
Secondary Succession	The series of changes that occur after a disturbance of an existing ecosystem
Species	Taxonomic group whose members can interbreed
Symbiosis	The relation between two different species of organisms that are interdependent
Taiga	A forested biome dominated by coniferous trees
Temperate Deciduous Forest	Trees lose their leaves in fall and regrow in spring
Temperate Forest	Distinct seasons and moderate climate
Trophic Level	Organism in a food chain that represents a feeding step in the passage of energy and materials through an ecosystem
Tropical Forest	Near the equator
Tundra	Cold and largely treeless across northern North America