

Environmental Science Vocabulary

environment - the air, water, minerals, organisms, and all other external factors surrounding and affecting a given organism at any time

food chain - a series of events in which one organism eats another

habitat - the place where an organism lives and that provides the things it needs

ecology - the study of how living things interact with each other and their environment

ecosystem - all the living and nonliving things that interact in an area

symbiosis - a close relationship between species that benefits at least one of the species

ex. -

commensalism - a relationship between two species in which one species benefits and the other is neither helped nor harmed

ex. -

competition - the struggle between organisms for the limited resources in a habitat

ex. -

niche - an organism's particular role in an ecosystem, or how it makes its living

ex. -

parasitism - a relationship in which one organism live on or inside another and harms it

ex. -

mutualism - a relationship between two species in which both species benefit

ex. -

consumer (heterotroph) - an organism that obtains energy by feeding on other organisms

ex. -

producer (autotroph) - an organism that can make its own food
ex. -

herbivore - consumer that only eats plants

carnivore - consumer that only eats animals

omnivore - a consumer that eats both plants and animals

food web - the pattern of overlapping food chains in an ecosystem

decomposer - an organism that breaks down wastes and dead organisms

population - all the members of one species in a particular area

community - all the different populations that live together in an area

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

environmental degradation - the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water, and soil; the destruction of ecosystems and the extinction of wildlife. (Any change or disturbance to the environment perceived to be deleterious or undesirable.)