



VOCABULARY LIST

A

Abiotic [ā'bī-ōt'ik]
a nonliving part of an ecosystem

Acid [as-id]
a chemical compound that:
1. turns blue litmus paper red
2. has a pH of less than 7
3. tastes sour, sharp or biting
4. when combined with a base
can form a salt

Accommodation
[uh-kom-uh-dey-shuh n]
an individual organism's
response to a change in the
ecosystem

Adaptation [ad-uh p-tey-shuh n]
a trait or characteristic that helps
an organism survive and meet its
needs

Amphibian [am-fib-ee-uh n]
a vertebrate animal that spends
part of its life in water and part
on land

Aquifer [ak-wuh-fer]
an underground layer of rock,
sand, or gravel through which
water easily moves

Atom [at-uhm]
the smallest particle of matter
that has the properties of that
matter.

B

Bacteria [bak-teer-ee-uh]
microorganisms that have cell
membranes but no nuclei

Balance [bal-uh ns]
a tool that measures an object's
mass

Barometer [buh-rom-i-ter]
an instrument for measuring air
pressure

Bedrock [bed-rok]
the bottom layer of soil, made
mostly of solid rock

Biome [bahy-ohm]
a region of the world defined by
its climate and the types of plants
and animals that live there

Boiling Point [boi-ling point]
the particular temperature at
which a substance changes state
from liquid to gas

C
Camouflage [kam-uh-flahzh]
an adaptation that allows an
animal to blend into its
surroundings

Carnivore [kahr-nuh-vohr]
an animal that only eats the meat
of other animals

Cell [sel]
the smallest unit of life

Chemical Compound
[kem-i-kuh l kom-pound]
a substance made of two or more
different elements

Chlorophyll [klawr-uh-fil]
a green pigment that allows a
plant cell to use light to make
food

Circuit [sur-kit]
a path that electricity follows

Conductor [kuh n-duhk-ter]
a material through which heat or
electricity flows easily

Constellation
[kon-stuh-ley-shuh n]
a group of stars that forms a
pattern or picture

Consumer [kuh n-soo-mer]
a living thing that eats other
living things for food

Crust [kruhst]
the layer of rock that forms the
outer surface of Earth

Cytoplasm [sahy-tuh-plaz-uh m]
the gel-like substance that fills a
cell

D

Decomposer
[dee-kuh m-poh-zer]
consumer that break down the
remains and wastes of plants and
animals



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Density [den-si-tee]

a measure of how tightly matter is packed in a given amount of space

Diffusion [di-fyoo-zuh n]

the movement of materials from an area of higher concentration to an area of lower concentration

Digestion [di-jes-chuh n]

the process that changes food into a form that the body can use

Diversity [di-vur-si-tee]

a measure of the number and variety of species in an ecosystem

E

Ecosystem [ek-oh-sis-tuh m]

an area in which living things interact with one another and with nonliving things

Electron [i-lek-tron]

the particle in an atom that has a negative charge

Element [el-uh-muh nt]

a basic building block of matter

Energy [en-er-jee]

the ability to do work or cause change; ability to make things move, stretch, or grow

Epicenter [ep-uh-sen-ter]

where an earthquake is felt most strongly or has its greatest intensity

Equator [i-kwey-ter]

an imaginary line that circles Earth halfway between the North and South poles

Erosion [i-roh-zuh n]

the movement of rock material from one place to another

Eruption [i-ruh-p-shuh n]

the flow of lava or ash from a volcano

Extinct [ik-stingkt]

all dead; no more left alive on Earth

F

Fault [fawlt]

a break or crack in Earth's crust where two plates come together

Feces [fee-seez]

solid waste produced by the body during digestion

Fission [fish-uh n]

a reaction in which the nucleus of an atom is split

Food Chain [food cheyn]

the path of food energy in an ecosystem from plants to animals

Force [fawrs]

a push or pull that causes an object to move, stop, or change direction

Forest [fawr-ist]

a biome that has many trees

Fossil [fos-uh l]

the remains or signs of past life

Friction [frik-shuh n]

a force that occurs when one object rubs against another object

Fungus [fuhng-guh s]

a plant-like organism that breaks down dead or dying plants

G

Galaxy [gal-uh k-see]

a very large group of stars

Gas [gas]

a form of matter that has no definite shape or volume

Gem [jem]

a mineral valued for its beauty

Generator [jen-uh-rey-ter]

a device that converts other forms of energy into electricity

Genetics [juh-net-iks]

the study of how organisms pass along traits over periods of time

Geothermal [jee-oh-thur-muh l]

heat energy produced from within Earth's crust

Glacier [gley-sheer]

a large mass of slow-moving ice

Gravity [grav-i-tee]

the pulling force between two objects



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H

Habitat [hab-i-tat]

the place where a plant or animal lives

Headland [hed-luhnd]

a point of land, usually high, that extends out into the water

Heat [heet]

the form of energy related to the random motion of the atoms and molecules that make up matter

Herbivore [hur-buh-vawr]

an animal that eats only plants

Humidity [hyoo-mid-i-tee]

the amount of water vapor in the air at any given time

Humus [hyoo-muh s]

decayed plant or animal material in soil

Hypothesis [hahy-poth-uh-sis]

a suggested statement or explanation that can be tested to answer a question

I

Igneous [ig-nee-uh s]

type of rock formed when melted rock hardens

Inertia [in-ur-shuh]

the property of matter that keeps an object at rest or moving in a straight line

Insect [in-sekt]

a type of animal that has three main body parts and six legs

Insulator [in-suh-ley-ter]

something that slows or stops the flow of energy, such as heat, electricity, or sound

Invertebrate [in-vur-tuh-brit]

an animal that does not have a backbone

Island [ahy-luhnd]

Landform that can be the result of a volcanic eruption at a hot spot

J

Jet Stream [jet stream]

narrow belt of high-speed winds in the upper troposphere

Jupiter [joo-pi-ter]

the fifth planet from the sun and the largest planet in the solar system

K

Kinetic Energy

[ki-net-ik en-er-jee]
the energy of motion

Kingdom [king-duhm]

the broadest group into which organisms are classified

L

Landslide [land-slahyd]

the sudden movement of loose rock and soil down a steep slope

Latitude [lat-i-tood]

a measure of how far a place is north or south of the equator

Lava [lah-vuh]

molten rock that reaches Earth's surface

Lens [lenz]

an object that refracts light

Lichen [lahy-kuh n]

a living thing composed of a fungus and an algae which can survive in harsh environments

Light [lahyt]

a form of energy that can travel in waves through empty space

Lithosphere [lith-uh-sfeer]

the cool, solid portion of Earth that includes all of the crust and part of the upper mantle

M

Machine [muh-sheen]

something that changes stored energy into motion and heat

Magma [mag-muh]

the molten rock beneath Earth's surface

Magnet [mag-nit]

an object that can attract iron and produce a magnetic field

Mammal [mam-uh l]

a vertebrate animal with hair that feeds its young milk



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Mantle [man-tl]

the thick layer of Earth beneath the crust: Magma is created in the mantle

Marine [muh-reen]

another name for a saltwater environment

Mass [mas]

a measure of the amount of matter in an object

Matter [mat-er]

anything that has mass and takes up space

Metamorphic

[met-uh-mawr-fik]
rock made from any other rock that has been changed by pressure, heat, very hot water, or a combination of these factors

Meteorite [mee-tee-uh-rahyt]

a meteor that hits the Earth

Microscope [mahy-kruh-skohp]

a tool that makes small objects appear larger

Migrate [mahy-greyt]

to move from one place to another

Mixture [miks-cher]

a physical combination of two or more substances

N

Neutron [noo-tron]

an atomic particle that lacks charge

Newton [noot-n]

a basic unit that measures a force, such as gravity

Nocturnal [nok-tur-nl]

active during the night

Nucleus [noo-klee-uhs]

1. the center of an atom containing protons and neutrons
2. the central part of a cell that directs the cell's activities and stores information to pass on to new cells
3. a mass of dust and frozen water and gases at the center of a comet

O

Omnivore [om-nuh-vawr]

an animal that eats both plants and animals

Opaque [oh-peyk]

not allowing light to pass through

Organelle [awr-guh-nel]

a structure that performs specific functions in the cell

Organism [awr-guh-niz-uh m]

a living thing

Osmosis [oz-moh-sis]

a special form of diffusion that works to keep water inside the cells

P

Parasite [par-uh-sahyt]

an organism that lives on or in another organism, helping itself but hurting the other organism

Permafrost [pur-muh-frawst]

a layer of soil that is always frozen

Photosynthesis

[foh-tuh-sin-thuh-sis]
the process by which plants transform energy from sunlight into chemical energy

Pistil [pis-tl]

the parts of a plant that produce the female sex cells

Planet [plan-it]

a large body in space that moves around a star

Plate Tectonics

[pleyt tek-ton-iks]
the theory that Earth's crust is divided into plates that are always moving

Pole [pohl]

the part of a magnet where the magnetic force is strongest

Pollution [puh-loo-shuh n]

the addition of harmful materials to the environment



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Population [pop-yuh-ley-shuh n]
a group of organisms of the same species living together in an ecosystem

Predator [pred-uh-ter]
an animal that hunts other animals for food

Producer [pruh-doo-ser]
an organism that makes its own food

Proton [proh-ton]
a small, positively-charged atomic particle

Q
Quartz [kwawrts]
a common rock-forming mineral with large crystals that can be many different colors

R
Rain Forest [reyn fawr-ist]
an ecosystem where it rains a lot

Reproduce [ree-pruh-doos]
to make more organisms of their own kind

Reservoir [rez-er-vwahr]
a natural or artificial pond or lake used to collect and store fresh water

Resistance [ri-zis-tuh ns]
the ability of a material to slow down or stop electric current

Revolution [rev-uh-loo-shuh n]
to move around another object in a circular way

Rock Cycle [rok sahy-kuhl]
an endless process in which rocks are changed from one type to another by weathering, erosion, heat, and pressure

Rotation [roh-tey-shuh n]
to turn on an axis

S
Satellite [sat-l-ahyt]
an object that orbits another object in space

Scavenger [skav-in-jer]
a living thing that feeds on dead organisms

Sedimentary
[sed-uh-men-tuh-ree]
a type of rock that forms when sediments are pressed together in layers

Seed [seed]
an undeveloped plant with stored food in a protective covering

Seismograph [sahyz-muh-graf]
a tool that records the strength of energy waves in an earthquake

Stratus [strey-tuh s]
a type of cloud that forms low in the atmosphere, possibly leading to light precipitation

Subduction [suh b-duhk-shuh n]
the downward movement of one plate at a convergent boundary

Symbiosis [sim-bee-oh-sis]
a relationship between two organisms that helps one or both of the organisms

T
Taiga [tahy-guh]
a forest biome characterized by long severe winters and short, cool summers

Telescope [tel-uh-skohp]
a tool that makes distant objects appear larger, brighter, and sharper

Temperature [tem-per-uh-cher]
the average motion energy of particles in matter, a measure of hot or cold

Topography [tuh-pog-ruh-fee]
surface landforms of an area

Trait [treyt]
a feature such as a body part or a behavior

Trough [trawf]
the lowest point of a wave

Tsunami [tsoo-nah-mee]
a huge sea wave produced by an earthquake, a landslide, or a volcanic eruption on the ocean floor



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Tundra [tuhn-druh]
Earth's coldest biome, with ground whose lower layers stay frozen all year long

U

Unicellular
[yoo-nuh-sel-yuh-ler]
made up of only one cell

Universe [yoo-nuh-vurs]
everything that exists, including stars, planets, and energy

V

Vacuole [vak-yoo-ohl]
a part of a cell that stores water and nutrients

Velocity [vuh-los-i-tee]
the speed and direction of a moving object

Volcano [vol-key-noh]
an opening in Earth's crust through which melted rock, hot gases, rock fragments, and ash reach the surface

Volt [vohlt]
a unit of measurement of the strength of a power source

W

Water Cycle
[waw-ter sahy-kuh l]
the repeated movement of water through the environment in different forms; also called the hydrologic cycle

Water Shed [waw-ter shed]
an area of land that is drained by a series of creeks and rivers

Watt [wot]
a unit of measure that tells how much electrical power is used

Weathering [weth-er-ing]
the process by which rock material is broken into smaller pieces

Weight [weyt]
a measure of the pull of gravity on an object

Work [work]
the result of a force causing an object to move in the direction the force is applied

X

Xylem [zahy-luh m]
a vascular tissue that conducts water and minerals through a plant

Y-Z



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Abiotic	Acid	Accommodation	Adaptation	Amphibian
Aquifer	Atom	Bacteria	Balance	Barometer
Bedrock	Biome	Boiling Point	Camouflage	Carnivore
Cell	Chemical Compound	Chlorophyll	Circuit	Conductor
Constellation	Consumer	Crust	Cytoplasm	Decomposer
Density	Diffusion	Digestion	Diversity	Ecosystem
Electron	Element	Energy	Epicenter	Equator
Erosion	Eruption	Extinct	Fault	Feces
Fission	Food Chain	Force	Forest	Fossil
Friction	Fungus	Galaxy	Gas	Gem
Generator	Genetics	Geothermal	Glacier	Gravity
Habitat	Headland	Heat	Herbivore	Humidity
Humus	Hypothesis	Igneous	Inertia	Insect
Insulator	Invertebrate	Island	Jet Stream	Jupiter
Kinetic Energy	Kingdom	Landslide	Latitude	Lava
Lens	Lichen	Light	Lithosphere	Machine
Magma	Magnet	Mammal	Mantle	Marine
Mass	Matter	Metamorphic	Meteorite	Microscope
Migrate	Mixture	Neutron	Newton	Nocturnal
Nucleus	Omnivore	Opaque	Organelle	Organism



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Osmosis	Parasite	Permafrost	Photosynthesis	Pistil
Planet	Plate Tectonics	Pole	Pollution	Population
Predator	Producer	Proton	Quartz	Rain Forest
Reproduce	Reservoir	Resistance	Revolution	Rock Cycle
Rotation	Satellite	Scavenger	Sedimentary	Seed
Seismograph	Stratus	Subduction	Symbiosis	Taiga
Telescope	Temperature	Topography	Trait	Trough
Tsunami	Tundra	Unicellular	Universe	Vacuole
Velocity	Volcano	Volt	Water Cycle	Water Shed
Watt	Weathering	Weight	Work	Xylem