

Glossary

- abiotic** [ADJ-U3] If something is **abiotic**, it is not a living thing.
- acre** [N-COUNT-U9] An **acre** is an imperial unit of area equal to about 0.002 square miles or about 0.40 hectares.
- aquatic life zone** [N-COUNT-U6] An **aquatic life zone** is an area in a body of water with a particular set of characteristics.
- arid** [ADJ-U11] If something is **arid**, it has air that contains very little moisture.
- atmosphere** [N-COUNT-U1] The **atmosphere** is the thin layer of air around the Earth.
- atom** [N-COUNT-U13] An **atom** is the smallest piece of matter that can exist by itself.
- atomic number** [N-COUNT-U13] An **atomic number** is a measure of the number of protons in an atom, and is used to identify atoms from different elements.
- autotroph** [N-COUNT-U4] An **autotroph**, also called a producer, is an organism that gets its nutrients from compounds in the environment.
- average** [ADJ-U10] If something is **average**, it has qualities that are typical or most common in a particular group or category.
- biome** [N-COUNT-U5] A **biome** is an area of the planet with a particular set of characteristics, including levels of temperature and precipitation.
- biosphere** [N-COUNT-U1] The **biosphere** is the layer on the Earth that supports all living organisms.
- biotic** [ADJ-U3] If something is **biotic**, it is a living thing.
- canyon** [N-COUNT-U2] A **canyon** is a very deep valley that often has a river or stream running along the bottom.
- cell** [N-COUNT-U15] A **cell** is a unit of life that is very small.
- chaparral** [N-COUNT or UNCOUNT-U5] **Chaparral** is a dry, temperate region with shrubs and small trees.
- chromosome** [N-COUNT-U15] A **chromosome** is a thread in a DNA molecule that contains genes.
- cliff** [N-COUNT-U2] A **cliff** is a place where a high area of land abruptly meets a lower area, so that the edge of the land is very steep.
- climate** [N-COUNT-U10] A **climate** is the pattern of weather conditions over a long period of time.
- cloud cover** [N-COUNT-U12] **Cloud cover** is a measure of how dense the clouds are in a particular area.
- coastal wetland** [N-COUNT-U6] A **coastal wetland** is an area of land along a coast that is sometimes or always covered in water.
- coastal zone** [N-COUNT-U6] A **coastal zone** is a warm, shallow area in an ocean that is along the edge of land.
- community** [N-COUNT-U3] A **community** is a group of all the living things in a particular area.
- component** [N-COUNT-U3] A **component** is an important piece or part of something.
- compound** [N-COUNT-U13] A **compound** is a combination of two or more elements.
- conclusion** [N-COUNT-U8] A **conclusion** is a decision or determination that is made after an experiment.
- coniferous forest** [N-COUNT-U5] A **coniferous forest** is a cold, dry region with tall trees that retain their leaves or needles throughout the year.
- conserve** [V-T-U14] To **conserve** something is to use little or none of something so that it will be available at a later time.
- consumer** [N-COUNT-U4] A **consumer**, also called a heterotroph, is an organism that gets its nutrients by feeding on other organisms.
- control group** [N-COUNT-U8] The **control group** is the part of an experiment that does not receive the substance or treatment that is being tested.
- convert** [V-T-U9] To **convert** something is to change it into a different form.
- cool temperate** [ADJ-U11] If the climate of an area is **cool temperate**, it is an area with a mild climate that typically has cold winters and moderately warm summers.

coral reef [N-COUNT-U6] A **coral reef** is an area in an ocean that is made up of a network of mineral structures, that support various types of marine life.

core [N-COUNT-U1] The **core** is the center part of the Earth.

crust [N-COUNT-U1] The **crust** is the surface of the Earth, made up of rock and soil.

current [N-COUNT-U10] A **current** is the movement of water in a particular direction.

deciduous forest [N-COUNT-U5] A **deciduous forest** is a temperate region with tall trees that shed their leaves and grow new ones each year.

decomposer [N-COUNT-U4] A **decomposer** is a consumer that feeds on dead organic material and processes it into the compounds that producers feed on.

desert [N-COUNT-U5] A **desert** is a hot, dry region with little plant life.

detritus feeder [N-COUNT-U4] A **detritus feeder** is a consumer that feeds on dead organic material.

DNA [N-UNCOUNT-U15] **DNA** is a molecule that carries genetic information.

ecosystem [N-COUNT-U3] An **ecosystem** is a set of living and nonliving things that exists in a particular environment or area together.

electromagnetic radiation [N-UNCOUNT-U14] **Electromagnetic radiation** is a type of kinetic energy that travels in waves and often produces light.

electron [N-COUNT-U13] An **electron** is a part of an atom with a negative electrical charge.

element [N-COUNT-U13] An **element** is a basic substance that is made up of one particular type of atom.

elevation [N-COUNT-U10] An **elevation** is the height of an area of land, usually measured against the level of the sea.

energy [N-UNCOUNT-U14] **Energy** is the ability to cause movement or action, or to transfer heat.

energy efficiency [N-UNCOUNT-U14] **Energy efficiency** is a measurement of how much energy is required to accomplish a particular amount of work.

energy quality [N-UNCOUNT-U14] **Energy quality** is a measurement of an energy's potential to do useful work.

Equator [N-COUNT-U11] The **Equator** is an imaginary line around the middle of the Earth with a latitude of zero degrees, that is an equal distance from the north and south poles.

estuary [N-COUNT-U6] An **estuary** is an area of coastal water where ocean water mixes with freshwater.

eukaryotic [ADJ-U15] If something is **eukaryotic**, it has complex cells with nuclei and may be either unicellular or multicellular.

evaluate [V-T-U8] To **evaluate** something is to judge something or draw a conclusion about something after thinking carefully about it.

experiment [N-COUNT-U8] An **experiment** is a scientific process that is designed to reveal the effect of something.

experimental group [N-COUNT-U8] The **experimental group** is the part of an experiment that receives the substance or treatment that is being tested.

floodplain zone [N-COUNT-U7] A **floodplain zone** is an area where rivers flow through lower elevations towards the ocean.

flowing [ADJ-U7] If something is **flowing**, it moves continuously in a particular direction.

freshwater [ADJ-U7] If an aquatic system is **freshwater**, it is a body of water that does not contain salt, or that contains a very small amount of salt.

gallon [N-COUNT-U9] A **gallon** is an imperial unit of volume equal to 128 fluid ounces or about 3.78 liters.

gene [N-COUNT-U15] A **gene** is a part of a DNA molecule that is found on a chromosome and determines a particular trait.

genetic diversity [N-UNCOUNT-U3] **Genetic diversity** is the degree of biological variation among individuals in a population.

genetic information [N-UNCOUNT-U15] **Genetic information** is a sequence of codes that establishes which traits a particular organism has.