

GCSE GEOGRAPHY VOCAB: The Living World

Abiotic	Relating to non-living things
Biotic	Relating to living things.
Consumer	Creature that eats animals and/or plant matter.
Decomposer	An organism such as a bacterium or fungus, that breaks down dead tissue, which is then recycled to the environment.
Ecosystem	A community of plants and animals that interact with each other and their physical environment.
Food chain	The connections between different organisms (plants and animals) that rely on one another as their source of food.
Food web	A complex hierarchy of plants and animals relying on each other for food.
Nutrient cycling	A set of processes whereby organisms extract minerals necessary for growth from soil or water, before passing them on through the food chain - and ultimately back to the soil and water.
Global ecosystem	Very large ecological areas on the earth's surface (or biomes), with fauna and flora (animals and plants) adapting to their environment. Examples include tropical rainforest and hot desert.
Producer	An organism or plant that is able to absorb energy from the sun through photosynthesis.
Biodiversity	The variety of life in the world or a particular habitat.
Commercial farming	Farming to sell produce for a profit to retailers or food processing companies.
Debt reduction	Countries are relieved of some of their debt in return for protecting their rainforests.
Deforestation	The chopping down and removal of trees to clear an area of forest.
Ecotourism	Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the wellbeing of the local people, and may involve education. It is usually carried out in small groups and has minimal impact on the local ecosystem.
Logging	The business of cutting down trees and transporting the logs to sawmills.
Selective logging	The cutting out of trees which are mature or inferior, to encourage the growth of the remaining trees in a forest or wood.
Soil erosion	Removal of topsoil faster than it can be replaced, due to natural (water and wind action), animal, and human activity. Topsoil is the top layer of soil and is the most fertile because it contains the most organic, nutrient-rich materials.
Subsistence farming	A type of agriculture producing food and materials for the benefit only of the farmer and his family.

Sustainability	Actions and forms of progress that meet the needs of the present without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
Appropriate technology	(Also called Intermediate technology) Technology that is suited to the needs, skills, knowledge and wealth of local people in the environment in which they live. It usually combines simple ideas with cheap and readily available materials, especially for use in poorer countries, and is environmentally friendly.
Desertification	The process by which land becomes drier and degraded, as a result of climate change or human activities, or both.
Hot desert	Parts of the world that have high average temperatures and very low precipitation.
Mineral extraction	The removal of solid mineral resources from the earth. These resources include ores, which contain commercially valuable amounts of metals, such as iron and aluminium; precious stones, such as diamonds; building stones, such as granite; and solid fuels, such as coal and oil shale.
Over-cultivation	Exhausting the soil by over-cropping the land.
Overgrazing	Grazing too many livestock for too long on the land, so it is unable to recover its vegetation.