

Glossary

aerate - to cause air to circulate through

air - the mixture of invisible, odorless, tasteless gases that surround the Earth

aphid - a small insect that sucks the juice of plants

aquatic - growing or living in or upon water

bacteria - microscopic, one-celled organisms. Most act as decomposers.

bay - a place in which a small body of water is set off from the main body of water and has land on three sides

beach - an expanse of sand or pebbles along a seashore

beneficial insect - one that eats harmful insects

biodegradable - waste that can be decomposed by bacterial action

biodegradables - material that can be broken down naturally

bivalve - shells that have two pieces hinged at the back

bulk buying - purchasing a particular item in large quantities

camouflage - the means or result of disguising things to deceive an enemy

campus - the grounds of a school

chlorophyll - the green pigment of leaves and plants

chrysalis - a case or hard covering a caterpillar sleeps in while it is changing into a butterfly

clouds - mass of vapor in the sky

collection station - a facility where recyclables are collected and processed for the market

compost - a mixture of plant and food waste used to fertilize the soil

compostable - organic materials that will break down or decompose naturally and can be used as an organic fertilizer to enrich the soil

condensation - process of turning vapor to liquid

coniferous tree - a tree that has cones and is mostly evergreen

contaminant - an impurity that causes air, soil, or water to be harmful to living organisms or the environment

continent - a large land mass

crab - a sea animal that has a hard shell and paddle-shaped back legs to help it swim

decay - to break down while rotting

deciduous tree - a tree that sheds leaves during a particular season

decompose - to decay or rot from a process of microbial action

decomposition - the process of decaying or rotting

dependent - needing something else for support to live

disposables - products designed to be thrown away after use; will be incinerated or sent to a landfill

dispose - to get rid of or throw away

dune - mound of sand usually covered with plants, formed by winds carrying sand into vegetated areas of the beach; forms slopes of the beach that are important to the slowing of incoming water

echolocation - the process of locating objects with sound waves

ecosystem - a system dealing with the interrelationships of organisms living in one environment

environment - the world around us including water, land, air, and food

endangered - in danger of extinction

eroding - land that is worn or washed away

erosion - the wearing away of the land surface by running water, wind, or ice

evaporation - the process of turning liquid to vapor

evergreen - trees with green leaves all year

extinct - complete disappearance of a species

fact - something known to be true

fertilizer - chemicals applied to crops and lawns that can be washed out of the air and soil and into our water supply

fiction - something made up or imaginary

filtration - the process of separating matter from a liquid

flounder - a type of flatfish that lives in the ocean

fog - water vapor obscuring vision

fossil - hardened or petrified plant or animal; a remnant impression, or trace of an animal or plant of past geological ages that has been preserved in the Earth's crust

fossil fuel - fuel found underground that is usually formed from dead plants and animals; fossil fuels include coal, crude oil, and natural gas

freeze - to harden into a solid (as ice) by loss of heat

globe - a model of the Earth

Greenhouse Effect - accumulation of heat in the lower atmosphere through the absorption of longwave radiation from the Earth's surface.

ground cover - plants that cover the surface of the Earth

gulf - a body of water that is an extension of an ocean or sea

habitat - the place in nature where plants and animals live

hazardous waste - waste from chemicals that are poisonous to the environment

homebuilder - someone who builds houses

jellyfish - simple animals made of jelly-like tissue that float on the ocean surface

junk mail - mail received that is unwanted by the occupant

landfill - a large outdoor area designed for waste disposal; sanitary landfills are lined with plastic and covered daily with dirt to prevent garbage from polluting surrounding land and water

larva - the immature, wingless, feeding stage of an insect that undergoes complete metamorphosis

litter - trash, wastepaper, or garbage lying scattered about

meadow - area of grassy land

metamorphosis - a change in form, structure, or function as a result of development

micro-organism - plant or vegetable organism too small to be seen without a microscope

mountain - a landmass higher than a hill

mulch - protective ground cover, including manure, wood chips, straw, seaweed, leaves, and other natural products, or synthetic materials, such as heavy paper or plastic, that protect the soil, save water, and prevent weed growth

nectar - the sweet secretion of a plant which attracts the insects or birds that pollinate the flower

nest - a structure of twigs, grass, and mud formed by a bird as a place to lay and incubate its eggs and raise its young

noise pollution - sound that is annoying and may cause hearing loss

ocean - the whole body of saltwater that covers nearly three-fourths of the surface of the Earth

opinion - what someone thinks or believes about something

organic - formed from living matter

packaging - the wrapper or container covering many items for sale

phosphate - chemicals added to detergents to produce suds

photosynthesis - process by which chlorophyll containing plants exposed to sunlight produce carbohydrates (sugars)

pollen - the fertilizing element of flowering plants consisting of fine, powdery, yellowish grains or spores

pollutant - a substance that can harm water, air, land, or living organisms

pollution - contamination of the environment with man-made waste

pond - a small body of water

precipitation - condensed moisture that falls back to Earth

predator - habitually preying upon other animals for food

prehistoric - pertaining to time before recorded history

prey - an animal hunted or seized for food

products - something produced by nature or by people that we use

pupa - an insect in the nonfeeding, usually immobile, transformation stage between the larva and the adult stage

radioactive - material that can damage or destroy living cells

recyclables - useful materials from garbage or waste that are used again and reprocessed

recycling - reprocessing of discarded materials into new, useful products; not the same as reuse of materials for their original purpose, but the terms are often used interchangeably

reduce - to make smaller in any way such as size or weight

reuse - to use again for the same or different purpose

rhythm - a beat that accompanies music

roosts - groups bats live in

sand dollar - a round hard sea animal that lives in the sand of the ocean floor

scales - thin plates that cover the body of a fish

sea horse - a tiny fish whose head looks like a tiny horse

sea urchin - a sea animal that is covered with prickly spines

seed - a small structure from which a plant or tree grows

shoreline - the place where water and land meet

slope - at an angle, the rise or descent of the Earth's surface

soil - part of the environment and Earth surface that is made up of mineral materials from rocks, partially decayed materials, and living organisms

solid waste - any discarded material that is not liquid or gas

source reduction - to use less to begin with at the place where waste is produced

sour - acid tasting

steam - gaseous or vaporized water

starfish - a star-shaped sea animal that lives in or on the sand of the ocean floor

surface erosion - the wearing away of the Earth's surface by wind or water

tertiary dune - the largest dune located the greatest distance from the shoreline; forms the border of the beach area

toxic - poisonous substance harmful to living organisms

transfer station - a facility where garbage is collected before being taken to the landfill.

trash - waste that is of no use and should be disposed of in a landfill

univalve - shells that have one piece

vapor - gaseous substances such as steam or mist

vegetation - all the plants or plant life of a place

waste - that which is no longer wanted

wind - air in motion

