

Edexcel A Geography GCSE

Topic 3: Ecosystems, Biodiversity & Management

Definitions Flashcards

This work by [PMT Education](https://www.pmt.education) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



Abiotic components



Abiotic components

Non-living environmental factors that have influence over the ecosystem (e.g. climate, light exposure, soil type).



Acid rain



Acid rain

Rain with a pH of around 4, formed when chemicals from industrial processes react with water in clouds to form acids.



Adaptation



Adaptation

An evolved trait of an animal or plant that helps them to cope with environmental stresses.



Biodiversity



Biodiversity

The variety of species of plants and animals within a region.



Biofuels



Biofuels

Fuels produced from organic material such as crops, vegetation and biomass.



Biomass



Biomass

Total mass of organisms in a set area.



Biome



Biome

Also known as a global-scale ecosystem; a large, distinct region of the Earth with similar climate, soil, plants and animals.



Biotic components



Biotic components

Living organisms that interact with the environment and other organisms within an ecosystem.



Buttress roots



Buttress roots

Large, thick tree roots that grow above the ground in tropical rainforests.



Camouflage



Camouflage

An animal adaptation where animals purposefully look like their surroundings to hide from predators.



Canopy



Canopy

The layer of a tropical rainforest where the tops of trees touch, forming a dense area of vegetation.



Cattle ranching



Cattle ranching

The rearing of cows on large areas of land, usually to produce meat to sell for a profit.



CITES



CITES

(The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora)
an international agreement that works to protect threatened wildlife from exploitation.



Clear felling



Clear felling

A form of logging where all trees in an area are cut down.



Climate change



Climate change

A distinct change in global or regional patterns of climate, such as changes in temperature or precipitation patterns.



Commercial farming



Commercial farming

Agriculture that is intended to create surplus produce to sell for a profit.



Conifers



Conifers

Cone-bearing trees that are usually evergreen and have needle-shaped leaves, native to colder environments.



Conservation



Conservation

Taking action to ensure a resource or environment is not depleted and over-exploited.



Consumers



Consumers

Organisms that receive energy from consuming (eating) other living organisms.



Deciduous Woodlands



Deciduous Woodlands

Vegetation that loses its leaves every year, due to seasonal changes.



Decomposers



Decomposers

Organisms that break down organic material and release the nutrients back into the ecosystem.



Deforestation



Deforestation

The permanent (and usually large-scale) removal of trees.



Drought



Drought

A prolonged dry period in the natural climate cycle that can occur anywhere in the world (WHO Definition).



Ecosystem



Ecosystem

A natural system in which a community of plants and animals interact with each other and their physical environment.



Ecotourism



Ecotourism

Tourism that aims to have reduced environmental impact while supporting conservation efforts and making it sustainable.



Epiphytes



Epiphytes

Plants that live on the surface of other plants, receiving nutrients from these plants.



Food web



Food web

A representation of the interactions between multiple producers and consumers within a specific ecosystem.



Forest fire



Forest fire

An uncontrolled fire that burns woodland and vegetation (also called a wildfire).



Fossil fuels



Fossil fuels

Fuels made up of the remains of organic material, such as oil, coal and gas.



Fuel wood



Fuel wood

Wood that is burnt to provide energy.



Gersmehl Model



Gersmehl Model

Shows the transfer of material between the vegetation & animals (biomass), soil and litter (dead vegetation).



Growing season



Growing season

The time of the year when temperatures and precipitation levels are high enough for plants to grow.



Heathland



Heathland

Low-lying land with small vegetation and acidic soil.



Leaching



Leaching

A process in soils where minerals are washed away by water (usually rainfall).



Litter



Litter

Organic matter (e.g. leaves) that falls onto a forest floor.



Litter



Litter

Organic matter that falls onto a forest floor.



Logging



Logging

The process of cutting down trees for wood.



Migration



Migration

The seasonal movement of animals.



Moorlands



Moorlands

Found in upland areas and often have small vegetation in low-nutrient, acidic soils.



Nutrient cycling



Nutrient cycling

The transfer of nutrients through an ecosystem, from the decay of organic material into the production and energy of living organisms.



Nutrients



Nutrients

Elements or compounds that support the growth of plants and animals, such as phosphates, potassium, magnesium, and nitrogen.



Open-cast mining



Open-cast mining

A mining technique where an area is cleared and resources are mined close to the surface, rather than underground (also called strip mining).



Plantations



Plantations

Farms where crops are grown in large amounts with the intention to sell for a profit.



Producers



Producers

Organisms that convert energy from the environment (mainly sunlight) into sugars (glucose).



Savanna biome



Savanna biome

A biome located around $15-30^{\circ}$ North and South of the Equator, characterised by high temperatures, very dry summers and very wet winters.



Selective logging



Selective logging

A form of logging where only certain trees are cut down to reduce the environmental effects of logging.



Slash-and-burn



Slash-and-burn

A farming practice where plants and trees are cut down and then purposefully burnt to clear the area.



Subsistence farming



Subsistence farming

Agriculture that is intended to produce only enough food for the farmer and their family to eat.



Sustainability



Sustainability

Managing resources and activities in a way that meets the demands for the present, while considering the impacts this will have for future generations.



Sustainable forestry



Sustainable forestry

Management strategies that work to reduce the environmental impacts of commercial forest use, allowing forestry to continue into the future at the same rate.



Temperate grassland biome



Temperate grassland biome

A biome located in non-coastal areas around 30-40° North and South of the equator, characterised by low precipitation and grasses as the major vegetation.



Tropical rainforest biome



Tropical rainforest biome

A biome located near the equator, characterised by very high precipitation and sustained warm temperatures.



Tundra biome



Tundra biome

A biome located in the far Northern hemisphere, characterised by very cold conditions and permanently frozen soils.



Urbanisation



Urbanisation

The increase in the proportion of the population living in urban areas.



Understory



Understory

The layer of a tropical rainforest that lies beneath the canopy but above the forest floor.



Wetlands



Wetlands

Saturated land (high water content in the soil) which can be called swamp-like or marshland.

