

Edexcel Geography GCSE

7: People and the Biosphere Glossary of Definitions

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Glossary of Definitions - People and the Biosphere

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

Altitude - A measurement of the height of the land (usually as height above sea level).

Altitudinal zonation - The presence of distinct bands of different vegetation types at different elevations, caused by the change of environmental conditions with altitude.

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

Biosphere - The living layer of Earth between the atmosphere (air) and the lithosphere (crust) where all plants and animals are found.

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

Boserupian theory - The theory that the demands of the growing population will always be met, as humans will continue to invent new ways to increase resource supply.

Carbon sequestration - The long-term capture and storage of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Coniferous forest biome (taiga/boreal) - A biome located at high latitudes, characterised by conifer trees and a cold climate.

Consumers - Organisms that receive energy from consuming (i.e. eating) living organisms.

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

Desert biome - A biome located around 30° north and south of the equator, characterised by extremely low precipitation levels and extreme daily temperature fluctuations.

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

Eutrophication - The growth of algae in a body of water due to excess nutrients, leading to the depletion of oxygen in an aquatic ecosystem.

Food chain - A linear relationship showing the biotic interactions within an ecosystem, from a producer to a final consumer.

Hydrological cycle - The continuous transfer of water throughout Earth.

Indigenous peoples - The earliest known settlers in an area.



Industrialisation - The development of the industrial sector in a country or region.

Malthusian theory - The theory that population growth increases exponentially but resource supply only increases linearly.

Mediterranean biome - A biome located 40-45° north of the equator (and in isolated spots south of the equator), characterised by mild, moist winters and hot, dry summers.

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

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

Savanna biome - A biome located around 15-30° north and south of the equator, characterised by high temperatures, very dry summers and very wet winters.

Temperate deciduous forest biome - A biome located around 40-50° north and south of the equator, characterised by deciduous trees (trees that shed their leaves) and moderate precipitation.

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.

Transpiration - The evaporation of water from plants.

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

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

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

