Ecology

AP Biology · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
taxis /ˈtæksiz/	In **taxis**, an animal moves toward or away from something.
kinesis /kəˈniːsɪs/	In **kinesis**, an animal moves faster or slower but not in one direction.
nocturnal and diurnal activity /nɒkˈtɜːnl ænd ˈdɪɜːnl ækˈtɪvɪti/	**Nocturnal and diurnal activity** means being active at night or by day.
territorial marking /ˌterɪˈtɔːrɪəl ˈmɑːkɪŋ/	Wolves use **territorial marking** to claim land.
coloration /ˌkʌləˈreɪʃn/	Bright **coloration** warns predators away.
foraging /ˈfɒrɪdʒɪŋ/	**Foraging** is searching for food.
Life-history strategy /laɪf ˈhɪstəri ˈstrætədʒi/	A **life-history strategy** is how an animal spends energy on growing and breeding.
photoperiodism	**Photoperiodism** lets plants respond to day length.
herbivory	**Herbivory** is animals eating plants.
kin selection	**Kin selection** explains helping close relatives.
ecosystems /ˈiːkəʊsɪstəmz/	Forests and lakes are **ecosystems**.
producers /prəˈdjuːsəz/	Plants are **producers**.
consumers /kənˈsuːməz/	Animals are **consumers**: they eat other living things.

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food chain /fuːd tʃeɪn/	A **food chain** shows who eats whom.
trophic level /ˈtrəʊfɪk ˈlevl/	Rabbits are at the second **trophic level**.
biome /ˈbaɪəʊm/	A desert is a **biome** with little rainfall.
autotrophs	Plants are **autotrophs**: they make their own food.
chemosynthetic	**Chemosynthetic** bacteria make food from chemicals.
heterotrophs	Animals are **heterotrophs**.
decomposers /ˌdiːkəmˈpəʊzəz/	Bacteria and fungi are **decomposers**.
endotherms	Birds and mammals are **endotherms**: they make their own heat.
ectotherms	Lizards are **ectotherms**: they get heat from outside.
biogeochemical cycle	The carbon cycle is a **biogeochemical cycle**.
reservoirs	**Reservoirs** store water behind dams.
transpiration /trænspəˈreɪʃn/	**Transpiration** is the loss of water from leaves.
nitrogen fixation /ˈnaɪtrədʒn fɪkˈseɪʃn/	**Nitrogen fixation** turns nitrogen gas into useful compounds.
nitrification /ˌnaɪtrɪfɪˈkeɪʃn/	**Nitrification** turns ammonium into nitrate.
ammonification /ˌæməˌnɪfɪˈkeɪʃn/	In **ammonification**, decomposers release ammonium from dead plants and animals.

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denitrification /diːˌnaɪtrɪfɪˈkeɪʃn/	**Denitrification** returns nitrogen gas to the air.
population /ˌpɒpjʊˈleɪʃn/	All the rabbits in a field form a **population**.
Exponential growth /ˌekspəˈnenʃl ɡrəʊθ/	**Exponential growth** gets faster and faster.
logistic growth /ləˈdʒɪstɪk ɡrəʊθ/	**Logistic growth** slows near the carrying capacity.
carrying capacity /ˈkærɪɪŋ kəˈpæsɪti/	The island can feed 200 deer at most: this is its **carrying capacity**. 200
Density-dependent /ˈdensɪti dɪˈpendənt/	**Density-dependent** factors get stronger in crowded populations.
Density-independent /ˈdensɪti ˌɪndɪˈpendənt/	**Density-independent** factors, like floods, affect all populations.
community /kəˈmjuːnɪti/	All the plants and animals in a pond form a **community**.
competition /ˌkɒmpəˈtɪʃn/	Two plants are in **competition** for light.
predation /prɪˈdeɪʃn/	A fox eating a rabbit is an example of **predation**.
symbiosis /ˌsɪmbaɪˈəʊsɪs/	**Symbiosis** is a close relationship between two species.
Simpson's diversity index	**Simpson's diversity index** measures how diverse an area is.
mutualism /ˈmjuːtʃuːəlɪzəm/	Bees and flowering plants benefit from **mutualism**.
commensalism	In **commensalism**, one species gains and the other is not affected.

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parasitism /ˈpærəsɪtɪzəm/	A tick feeding on a deer is **parasitism**.
niche partitioning	**Niche partitioning** lets species share resources.
trophic cascade	Removing wolves caused a **trophic cascade** down the food chain.
Biodiversity /ˌbaɪəʊdaɪˈvɜːsɪti/	**Biodiversity** is the variety of life.
resilient /rɪˈsɪlɪənt/	A **resilient** ecosystem recovers quickly.
keystone species /ˈkiːstəʊn ˈspiːsiːz/	A **keystone species** has a large effect on its ecosystem.
ecological succession /ˌekəˈlɒdʒɪkl səkˈseʃn/	**Ecological succession** is the slow change of a community over time.
heterozygote advantage	**Heterozygote advantage** keeps the sickle-cell allele common.
invasive species /ɪnˈveɪsɪv ˈspiːsiːz/	Rabbits became an **invasive species** in Australia.
biomagnification /ˌbaɪəʊˌmæɡnɪfɪˈkeɪʃn/	In **biomagnification**, poisons build up at each step of a food chain.
eutrophication /ˌjuːtrəfɪˈkeɪʃn/	**Eutrophication** happens when fertiliser runs into a lake.