Populations

AP Environmental Science · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
niche /niːʃ/	Each species has its own **niche**: its role and what it eats.
generalist /ˈdʒenərəlɪst/	A **generalist** species can eat many foods.
habitats /ˈhæbɪtæts/	Cutting down forests destroys **habitats**.
specialist /ˈspeʃəlɪst/	A **specialist** species needs one special habitat.
vulnerable	Small populations are **vulnerable** to disease.
reproductive strategies	**Reproductive strategies** differ: some animals have many young, others few.
offspring /ˈɒfspɹɪŋ/	The **offspring** look like their parents.
mature	Elephants take many years to **mature**.
biotic potential	**Biotic potential** is the fastest a population could grow.
colonize	Weeds quickly **colonize** empty land.
invasive species /ɪnˈveɪsɪv ˈspiːsiːz/	Rabbits became an **invasive species** in Australia.
survivorship curve /səˈvaɪvəʃɪp kɜːv/	A **survivorship curve** shows how many animals are still alive at each age.
cohort /ˈkəʊhɔːt/	A **cohort** is a group of animals born at the same time.

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log scale	A **log scale** shows very large numbers on a small graph.
carrying capacity /ˈkæɹiɪŋ kəˈpæsɪti/	The island can feed 200 deer at most: this is its **carrying capacity**. 200
resources /ɹɪˈzɔːsɪz/	Animals compete for **resources** such as food and water.
overshoot /ˌəʊvəˈʃuːt/	**Overshoot** happens when a population grows past its carrying capacity.
dieback	After overshoot comes **dieback**: many animals die.
fluctuate /ˈflʌktʃueɪt/	Deer numbers **fluctuate** from year to year.
exponential growth /ˌekspəˈnenʃl ɡɹəʊθ/	A population that doubles every year shows **exponential growth**.
logistic growth /ləˈdʒɪstɪk ɡɹəʊθ/	**Logistic growth** slows as the population reaches its limit.
fecundity	**Fecundity** is how many young an animal can have.
limiting factors /ˈlɪmɪtɪŋ ˈfæktəz/	Food and space are **limiting factors** for a population.
density-dependent factors	Disease is one of the **density-dependent factors**: it spreads faster in crowds.
density-independent factors	Floods are **density-independent factors**: they hit every population.
age-structure diagram /eɪdʒ ˈstɹʌktʃə ˈdaɪəɡɹæm/	An **age-structure diagram** shows how many people are in each age group.

Word	Example
proportion /prəˈpɔːʃn/	Draw each part in the right **proportion**.
population momentum	**Population momentum** keeps a population growing after birth rates fall.
total fertility rate /ˈtəʊtl fɜːˈtɪlɪti reɪt/	The **total fertility rate** is the average number of children per woman.
replacement-level fertility	**Replacement-level fertility** is about two children per woman.
family planning /ˈfæmɪli ˈplænɪŋ/	**Family planning** helps couples choose how many children to have.
infant mortality	Clean water lowers **infant mortality**.
migration /maɪˈgreɪʃn/	**Migration** from the countryside makes cities grow.
birth rate /bɜːθ reɪt/	The **birth rate** is the number of babies born for every thousand people each year.
Malthusian theory	**Malthusian theory** says population will grow faster than food.
rule of 70	The **rule of 70** says a 2% growth rate doubles a population in 35 years. 2% 35
doubling time /ˈdʌblɪŋ taɪm/	The **doubling time** is how long a population takes to become twice as large.
ecological footprint /ˌekəˈlɒdʒɪkl ˈfʊtprɪnt/	Eating less beef can reduce an **ecological footprint**.
urbanization /ˌɜːbənaɪˈzeɪʃn/	**Urbanization** means more people moving to cities.

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economic development /ˌiːkəˈnɒmɪk dɪˈveləpmənt/	**Economic development** improves people's living standards and opportunities.
demographic transition /ˌdeməˈgræfɪk trænˈsɪʃn/	The **demographic transition** shows birth and death rates falling as countries develop.
growth rate /grəʊθ reɪt/	The **growth rate** is births minus deaths, plus migration.