Atmospheric Pollution

AP Environmental Science · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
Air pollution /eə pə'luːʃn/	**Air pollution** harms our lungs.
Primary pollutants /'praɪmərɪ pə'luːtənts/	**Primary pollutants** come straight from a source, like a car exhaust.
secondary pollutants /'sekəndərɪ pə'luːtənts/	**Secondary pollutants** form when primary pollutants react in the air.
Photochemical smog /ˌfəʊtəʊ'kemɪkl smɒg/	**Photochemical smog** forms when sunlight hits car exhaust gases.
ozone /'əʊzəʊn/	An **ozone** molecule contains three oxygen atoms.
thermal inversion /'θɜːml ɪn'vɜːʃn/	A **thermal inversion** traps polluted air near the ground.
• **Particulate matter** /pə'tɪkjʊleɪt 'mætə/	**Particulate matter** is tiny bits of dust and soot.
radon /'reɪdɒn/	**Radon** is a radioactive gas that can collect in basements.
asbestos /æs'bestəs/	**Asbestos** was used in old buildings and harms the lungs.
scrubbers /'skrʌbəz/	**Scrubbers** remove sulfur dioxide from factory smoke.
Acid rain /'æsɪd reɪn/	**Acid rain** damages forests and lakes.
combustion /kəm'bʌstʃn/	**Combustion** of petrol powers a car.

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lead /liːd/	**Lead** from old petrol polluted the air.
Clean Air Act	The **Clean Air Act** limits air pollution in the United States.
volatile organic compounds /'vɒlətaɪl ɔː'gænɪk 'kɒmpaʊndz/	Paints give off **volatile organic compounds**.
decomposition /ˌdiːkɒmpə'zɪʃn/	**Decomposition** breaks a big problem into small parts.
asphyxiant	Carbon monoxide is an **asphyxiant**: it stops the body getting oxygen.
formaldehyde	**Formaldehyde** is an indoor pollutant from some furniture.
catalytic converter /ˌkætə'lɪtɪk kən'vɜːtə/	A **catalytic converter** cleans a car's exhaust.
vapor recovery nozzle	A **vapor recovery nozzle** catches fumes when you fill a car with petrol.
wet scrubber	A **wet scrubber** sprays water to clean smoke.
electrostatic precipitator	An **electrostatic precipitator** uses charge to remove dust from smoke.
baghouse filter	A **baghouse filter** traps dust in fabric bags.
acid deposition	**Acid deposition** damages forests and lakes.
aluminium /ˌæljʊ'mɪnɪəm/	Making **aluminium** uses a lot of electricity.

Word	Example
leaching	Heavy rain causes **leaching**: it washes nutrients out of the soil.
limestone /ˈlaɪmstəʊn/	**Limestone** is a rock made mostly of calcium carbonate.
buffer /ˈbʌfə/	Limestone acts as a **buffer** against acid rain.
noise pollution /nɔɪz pəˈluːʃn/	Traffic causes **noise pollution**.
decibel	Noise is measured in **decibels**, and every 10 more sounds about twice as loud.
hearing loss /ˈhɪərɪŋ lɒs/	Loud music can cause **hearing loss**.
stress /stres/	The same match can cause different **stress** in two players.

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