Organisms and their environment

IGCSE Biology · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
energy /ˈenədʒi/	Food gives your body the **energy** it needs to move.
photosynthesis /ˌfəʊtəʊˈsɪnθəsɪs/	Plants make sugar by **photosynthesis**.
respiration /ˌrespɪˈreɪʃn/	**Respiration** releases energy from glucose.
environment /enˈvaɪrənmənt/	A fish lives in a water **environment**.
food chain /fuːd tʃeɪn/	A **food chain** shows who eats whom.
food web /fuːd web/	A **food web** links many food chains.
producer /prəˈdjuːsə/	Grass is a **producer**.
nutrients /ˈnjuːtrɪənts/	Food gives us the **nutrients** we need.
consumer /kənˈsuːmə/	A rabbit is a **consumer**.
herbivore /ˈhɜːbɪvɔː/	A cow is a **herbivore**.
carnivore /ˈkɑːnɪvɔː/	A lion is a **carnivore**.
decomposer /ˌdiːkəmˈpəʊzə/	A fungus is a **decomposer**.
decomposition /ˌdiːkɒmpəˈzɪʃn/	**Decomposition** breaks a big problem into small parts.
trophic level /ˈtrəʊfɪk ˈlevl/	Rabbits are at the second **trophic level**.

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pyramid /ˈpɪrəmɪd/	A **pyramid** of numbers shows how many organisms are at each level.
biomass /ˌbaɪəʊˈmæs/	The **biomass** of the grass is greater than the biomass of the rabbits.
efficiency /ɪˈfɪʃənsi/	A lamp with 20% **efficiency** turns only a fifth of its energy into light.
crop plants /krɒp plænts/	Wheat and maize are **crop plants**.
overharvesting /ˌəʊvəˈhɑːvɪstɪŋ/	**Overharvesting** of cod has made it rare.
foreign species /ˈfɒrən ˈspiːsiːz/	A **foreign species** can harm local animals.
carbon cycle /ˈkɑːbən ˈsaɪkl/	The **carbon cycle** moves carbon through living things and the air.
carbon dioxide /ˈkɑːbən daɪˈɒksaɪd/	We breathe out **carbon dioxide**.
combustion /kəmˈbʌstʃn/	**Combustion** of petrol powers a car.
fossil fuels /ˈfɒsl ˈfjuːəlz/	Coal and oil are **fossil fuels**.
nitrogen cycle /ˈnaɪtrədʒn ˈsaɪkl/	The **nitrogen cycle** moves nitrogen through soil, plants and air.
proteins /ˈprəʊtiːnz/	Meat, eggs and beans are rich in **proteins**, which are made from amino acids.
microorganisms /ˌmaɪkrəʊˈɔːgənɪzəmz/	Stomach acid kills **microorganisms** in food.
ammonium ions /əˈməʊnɪəm ˈaɪɒnz/	Bacteria turn proteins into **ammonium ions**.

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nitrification /ˌnaɪtrɪfɪ'keɪʃn/	**Nitrification** turns ammonium into nitrate.
nitrate ions /'naɪtreɪt 'aɪɒnz/	Plants need **nitrate ions** to make proteins.
nitrogen fixation /'naɪtrədʒn fɪk'seɪʃn/	**Nitrogen fixation** turns nitrogen gas into useful compounds.
bacteria /bæk'tɪərɪə/	Chlorine kills **bacteria** in drinking water.
amino acids /ə'miːnəʊ 'æsɪdz/	Proteins are made of **amino acids**.
digestion /daɪ'dʒestʃn/	**Digestion** breaks food into small molecules.
deamination /ˌdiːmɪ'neɪʃn/	**Deamination** turns extra amino acids into urea in the liver.
denitrification /diːˌnaɪtrɪfɪ'keɪʃn/	**Denitrification** returns nitrogen gas to the air.
population /ˌpɒpjʊ'leɪʃn/	All the rabbits in a field form a **population**.
species /'spiːsiːz/	Lions and tigers are different **species**.
community /kə'mjuːnɪti/	All the plants and animals in a pond form a **community**.
ecosystem /'iːkəʊsɪstəm/	A pond is an **ecosystem**.
competition /ˌkɒmpə'tɪʃn/	Two plants are in **competition** for light.
predation /prɪ'deɪʃn/	A fox eating a rabbit is an example of **predation**.
resources /rɪ'zɔːsɪz/	Animals compete for **resources** such as food and water.

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Word	Example
lag phase /læg feɪz/	In the **lag phase**, the bacteria are not yet dividing quickly.
exponential phase /ˌekspəˈnenʃl feɪz/	In the **exponential phase**, the number of bacteria doubles again and again.
stationary phase /ˈsteɪʃənəri feɪz/	In the **stationary phase**, the number stays the same.
limiting factor /ˈlɪmɪtɪŋ ˈfæktə/	On a dark day, light is the **limiting factor** for photosynthesis.
death phase /deθ feɪz/	In the **death phase**, more bacteria die than are made.

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