Human influences on ecosystems

IGCSE Biology · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
fertilisers /ˈfɜːtəlaɪzəz/	Farmers add **fertilisers** to help crops grow.
yields /jiːldz/	Better seeds give higher **yields**.
insecticides /ˌɪnˈsektɪsaɪdz/	**Insecticides** kill insects that eat crops.
herbicides /ˈhɜːbɪsaɪdz/	**Herbicides** kill weeds.
weeds /wiːdz/	**Weeds** compete with crops for light and water.
selective breeding /sɪˈlektɪv ˈbriːdɪŋ/	Farmers use **selective breeding** to get cows that give more milk.
crop plants /krɒp plænts/	Wheat and maize are **crop plants**.
livestock /ˈlaɪvstɒk/	Cows and sheep are **livestock**.
monoculture /ˈmɒnəʊkʌltʃə/	A **monoculture** grows only one kind of crop.
biodiversity /ˌbaɪəʊdaɪˈvɜːsɪti/	A rainforest has high **biodiversity**.
species /ˈspiːsiːz/	Lions and tigers are different **species**.
habitats /ˈhæbɪtæts/	Cutting down forests destroys **habitats**.
resources /rɪˈzɔːsɪz/	Animals compete for **resources** such as food and water.
pollution /pəˈluːʃn/	Smoke from factories causes **pollution**.

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food webs /fuːd webz/	Pollution can break **food webs**.
food chains /fuːd tʃeɪnz/	Poison can build up along **food chains**.
deforestation /diːˌfɒrɪˈsteɪʃn/	**Deforestation** destroys the homes of many animals.
extinction /ekˈstɪŋkʃn/	Dinosaurs suffered **extinction** long ago.
carbon dioxide /ˈkɑːbən daɪˈɒksaɪd/	We breathe out **carbon dioxide**.
sewage /ˈsuːɪdʒ/	**Sewage** in rivers kills fish.
ecosystems /ˈiːkəʊsɪstəmz/	Forests and lakes are **ecosystems**.
eutrophication /juːtrəfɪˈkeɪʃn/	**Eutrophication** happens when fertiliser runs into a lake.
nitrate ions /ˈnaɪtreɪt ˈaɪɒnz/	Plants need **nitrate ions** to make proteins.
producers /prəˈdjuːsəz/	Plants are **producers**.
decomposition /ˌdiːkɒmpəˈzɪʃn/	**Decomposition** breaks a big problem into small parts.
decomposers /ˌdiːkəmˈpəʊzəz/	Bacteria and fungi are **decomposers**.
oxygen /ˈɒksɪdʒn/	Your cells need **oxygen** to release energy.
aerobic respiration /eəˈrəʊbɪk ˌrespɪˈreɪʃn/	**Aerobic respiration** uses oxygen to release energy from glucose.
non-biodegradable /nɒn ˌbaɪəʊdɪˈgreɪdəbl/	Plastic bags are **non-biodegradable**.

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plastics /ˈplæstɪks/	**Plastics** in the sea harm turtles.
methane /ˈmiːθeɪn/	Cows give off **methane**.
greenhouse effect /ˈgriːnhaʊs ɪˈfekt/	The **greenhouse effect** keeps the Earth warm.
climate change /ˈklaɪmət tʃeɪndʒ/	**Climate change** makes some places hotter and drier.
sustainable /səˈsteɪnəbl/	**Sustainable** fishing leaves enough fish to breed.
fish /fɪʃ/	**Fish** breathe through gills.
conserved /kənˈsɜːvd/	The forest is **conserved** as a national park.
quotas /ˈkwəʊtəz/	Fishing **quotas** limit how many fish can be caught.
closed seasons /kləʊzd ˈsiːznz/	**Closed seasons** stop fishing while fish are breeding.
endangered /enˈdeɪndʒəd/	The giant panda was **endangered**.
hunting /ˈhʌntɪŋ/	**Hunting** has made many animals rare.
overharvesting /ˌəʊvəˈhɑːvɪstɪŋ/	**Overharvesting** of cod has made it rare.
introduced species /ˌɪntrəˈdjuːst ˈspiːsiːz/	Rabbits were an **introduced species** in Australia.
captive breeding /ˈkæptɪv ˈbriːdɪŋ/	**Captive breeding** in zoos helps save rare animals.
artificial insemination /ˌɑːtɪˈfɪʃl ɪnˌsemɪˈneɪʃn/	**Artificial insemination** helps rare animals have young.

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Word	Example
in vitro fertilisation /ɪn ˈvɪtrəʊ ˌfɜːtɪlaɪˈzeɪʃn/	**In vitro fertilisation** joins egg and sperm in a lab dish.
seed banks /siːd bæŋks/	**Seed banks** store seeds of rare plants.
drugs /drʌgz/	Many **drugs** come from plants.
genes /dʒiːnz/	**Genes** control your eye colour.
genetic variation /dʒɪˈnetɪk ˌveərɪˈeɪʃn/	**Genetic variation** helps a species survive change.