**Unit VIII Vocabulary: Ecology**

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| 1. Abiotic factor
 | Non-living factor that affects an ecosystem in some way; examples: sunlight, water |
| 1. Biotic factor
 | Living factor that affects an ecosystem in some way; examples: predators, prey |
| 1. Niche
 | An organism’s role in an environment |
| 1. Symbiosis
 | An association between two organisms of different species (living closely together) |
| 1. Mutualism
 | A type of symbiosis in which both species benefit; example: insects and flowering plants |
| 1. Parasitism
 | A type of symbiosis in which one species benefits and the other is harmed; example: dogs and ticks |
| 1. Commensalism
 | A type of symbiosis in which one species benefits from the relationship and the other organism does not benefit or harm from the relationship; example: orchids and tree branches |
| 1. Autotroph (producers)
 | Organism that makes its own food (bottom of energy pyramid); has the most available energy; example: plants |
| 1. Heterotroph (consumers)
 | Organism that must get food energy from other sources (higher levels of energy pyramid); example: humans |
| 1. Trophic level
 | Level or step in a food chain or web (troph = food); examples: autotroph, heterotroph |
| 1. Exponential growth
 | Population growth exhibited when a population has unlimited resources and is free to reproduce (J-shaped curve) |
| 1. Logistic growth
 | Population growth exhibited when a population’s resources run out and growth slows or stops (S-shaped curve) |
| 1. Density dependent factor
 | A factor affecting an ecosystem relative to size; example: food, space and other limited resources |
| 1. Density independent factor
 | A factor affecting an ecosystem regardless of size; example: weather, climate, natural disasters |
| 1. Carrying capacity
 | The maximum number of organisms an environment can support due to available resources |
| 1. Gymnosperm
 | Vascular plant that produces cones |
| 1. Angiosperm
 | Vascular plant that produces flowers and fruits (seeds contained in an ovary) |
| 1. Xylem
 | Type of vascular tissue that transports water from the roots through the stem and to the leaves of a plant |
| 1. Phloem
 | Type of vascular tissue that transports sugar and other dissolved nutrients throughout a plant |
| 1. Innate behavior
 | Instinctive behavior with which species are born with; examples: suckling, hibernation, imprinting, parental behavior toward young) |
| 1. Learned behavior
 | Behavior that is acquired through experience; examples: chimpanzee using tools to accomplish a task, classical conditioning |
| 1. Social behavior
 | Behavior among members of the same species; examples: courtship and in some cases, territorial or aggressive |
| 1. Biosphere
 | The part of the earth where living things exist. |
| 1. Scavenger
 | Organism that eat the remains of organisms that were killed by another organism |
| 1. Decomposer
 | Organism that consumes an organism that has broken down |
| 1. Predation
 | Organism that consumes another organism |