ecology	an area of science focused on the relationship of living things to each other and their natural environment; a scientist in this area is called an ecologist
ecosystem	an interconnected community that includes all the living and nonliving things found in a certain area
environment	everything that surrounds an organism and influences it
food chain	a graphic which traces energy flow in an ecosystem; for example: sun→plants→fish→racoon
organism	a living thing

germination	process by which seeds swell up and begin to sprout and develop roots
terrarium	a closed glass or plastic container in which terrestrial organisms can live and be observed
terrestrial	having to do with the land or the Earth

adaptation	a change in order to fit in a new situation or use
biodiversity	a wide variety of organisms
carnivore	a consumer which gets its energy by eating only meat/animal flesh
consumer	an organism that gets it energy by eating other organisms
fertile	rich in nutrients; often used to describe soil
forest	an area of land densely populated with trees
grassland	a large, flat area of land which is mostly populated by tall grasses and few trees
herbivore	a consumer which gets it energy by eating only plants and vegetation
omnivore	a consumer which gets it energy by eating both plants and meat/animal flesh
producer	an organism that can make its own food through the process of photosynthesis
Decomposer	an organism that gets its energy from breaking down decaying organic material; the role of decomposers is the recycling of nutrients throughout the ecosystem

aquatic	having to do with water
aquarium	a glass or plastic container in which aquatic organisms can live and be observed

photosynthesis	the process in which plants use carbon dioxide and sunlight to create sugar for themselves for food
radiation	a way that energy is transferred from the Sun to Earth

food chain	a way to trace the Sun's energy from one organism to another
niche	the specific role an organism plays within its ecosystem
Food web	A system of interlocking and interdependent food chains

abiotic factors	nonliving things in an ecosystem such as light, air, and soil
biotic factors	living things in an ecosystem such as plants and animals; organisms depend on **abiotic** factors for survival
dependent relationships	relying on another; for example, plants rely on the sun for its light
interdependent relationships	relying on one another; For example, elodea is a producer and provides food for a snail. It also provides shelter for hiding and laying eggs and adds oxygen to the water. The snail eats dead leaves and adds fertilizer in the form of feces. The snail also gives off carbon dioxide, which plants use for photosynthesis.

pollutant	a harmful or unpleasant substance which can have negative effects on an ecosystem when spread through the air, water, or soil
Structural Adaptation	Adaptations that help an organism survive and thrive. Structural adaptations are physical features of an organism like the bill on a bird or the fur on a bear
Behavioral Adaptations	Behavioral adaptations are the things organisms do to survive. For example, bird calls and migration are behavioral adaptations.