

Vocabulary for Investigations 1-3

Test on October 25, 2013

Ecosystem: A community of organisms interacting with each other and with the nonliving environment.

Environment: Everything that surrounds and influences an organism.

Environmental Factor: One part of the environment. An environmental factor can be nonliving such as water, light and temperature. It can be living, such as plants and animals.

Organism: Any living thing, including all plants and animals.

Living: The condition of being alive.

Nonliving: Something that has never been alive, or things that were once alive and are no longer alive.

Condition: Refers to the existing state of something (ex: We can refer to dry conditions or wet conditions when describing the environmental factor of water).

Preferred Environment: the set of environmental conditions that an organism appears to choose over other conditions.

Observation: the information obtained through your senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste).

Interpretation: The meaning you make from your observations. (ex: you observe that all the isopods to to one corner of the runway. You interpret that to mean that they prefer the conditions in that corner.

Food Chain: a description of the feeding sequence of one set of organisms in an ecosystem, such as grass seeds, chipmunk, and hawk. Arrows point in the direction of the flow of energy from one organism to another.

Food Web: Interconnected food chains that show where there may be competition for food resources.

Resource: Something an animal needs such as food, water, or shelter.

Survive: To remain alive.

Herbivore: An animal that eats plants.

Carnivore: An animal that eats other animals.

Omnivore: An animal that eats both plants and other animals.

Producer: an organism that makes its own food. Plants and algae are producers.

Consumer: an animal that eats other organisms.

Decomposer: An organism that eats dead plants and animals. The most important decomposers are bacteria and fungi. (*compose*= “to make by combining things” and the prefix *de*= reverses the meaning to “breaking something down into parts”)

Competition: When two or more animals eat the same food.

Pollination: The moving of pollen to the female part of the flower.

Sprout: To start to grow.

Evaporate: To dry up and go into the air.

Terrarium: A container with plants growing inside.

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Terrestrial: Refers to Earth's land environments.

Thrive: To grow and be healthy.

Germinate: When a seed sprouts, or starts to grow and develop

Nectar: The sweet liquid some flowers produce that serves a food for butterflies and hummingbirds.

Pollen: A fine powder or dust produced by flowers. Pollen is found on the tips of stamen.

Seed Dispersal: The movement of seeds from one place to another.

Aquarium: A tank for keeping live water plants and animals.

Aquatic Environment: a water environment.

Algae: Microscopic organisms. The green color in your aquarium or in another fresh water environment is from many, many green algae. Snails and scuds eat algae for food.

Freshwater Environment: a pond, lake, stream, pool or aquarium. The water is not salty like the ocean.

Elodea: a common aquatic plant.

Lemna (duckweed) is an aquatic plant that floats on the surface of the water.

Marine Ecosystem: an ocean or saltwater bay environment.

Plankton: microscopic aquatic organisms that drift in the water. Some of them are plantlike, and some are animal-like. They are very important to food webs in freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Phytoplankton: Tiny plantlike organisms. They are the producers in freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Zooplankton: Microscopic animals. They are the consumers in freshwater and marine ecosystems.