

Kansas Prairies

Vocabulary

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Abiotic factors: Abiotic factors are the non-living things found in an ecosystem. They include soil, temperature, weather, water, and sunlight. These factors affect the type of organisms that live in a particular place.

Biotic factors: Biotic factors are the living things found in an ecosystem. They include organisms such as plants and animals. An organism depends on biotic factors for food, shelter, protection, and reproduction.

Carnivore: An animal that eats mostly meat, fresh or decomposed.

Consumer: A consumer is an organism that eats other organisms to get energy to live. Examples of consumers are cows, people, rabbits, tigers.

Decomposer: A decomposer uses dead organisms and the waste material of other organisms for food. Examples of decomposers are bacteria, fungi that include mushrooms and mold.

Ecology: Ecology is the study of the interactions that take place among the living organisms and nonliving parts of an ecosystem.

Ecosystem: An ecosystem made up of organisms interacting with one another and with nonliving factors to form a working unit. Examples are a stream, desert, prairie, wetland, lake, forest, tundra, etc.

Food Chain: A food chain is a simple model that shows how energy from food passes from one organism to another. An arrow links each organism. The arrow means “eaten by.” The arrows show that energy moves from one organism to another in the form of food starting with a plant.

Food Web: A food web is a series of overlapping food chains that shows all the possible feeding relationships in an ecosystem.

Herbivore: An animal that eats mostly plant material.

Insectivore: An animal that eats mostly insects.

Limiting factors: Limiting factors are the things that limit the size of a population, such as the amount of rainfall, temperature, sunlight, and food.

Omnivore: An animal that eats both plant material and meat.

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Population: A population is a group of the same type of organism living in the same place at the same time.

Predator: A predator is an animal that hunts another animal for food.

Prey: Prey is the organism that predators hunt to eat.

Producer: A producer is an organism that makes its own food, like a plant. It carries on the process of photosynthesis to produce food using the sun's energy. Examples of producers are sunflowers, grass, corn, tomatoes, and rice.

