

GLOSSARY



antenna (pl. antennae) A sensory organ attached to an insect's head. Antennae are used to smell, touch, taste, and sometimes hear.

aphid An insect that lives on the stems and leaves of plants and sucks out the plant juices for food.

bristles Hair-like filaments on the body of an earthworm that help it move through the soil.

castings Nutrient-rich wastes deposited by earthworms.

clay A kind of soil made up of very fine particles.

clitellum The thick band around the middle of an earthworm that functions in reproduction.

coarse Composed of large particles.

components Materials that make up a mixture.

conclusion A statement that describes what an experiment showed, based on observations.

condensation The process by which a gas changes to a liquid.

controlled variable Any variable that is held constant in an experiment.

cubic centimeter (cm³, or cc) A unit of volume in the metric system.

decomposer Organism that breaks down dead plants and animals into simple nutrients and minerals that living things can use.

degree Celsius A unit in a scale of temperature in which the freezing point of water is 0° (32°F) and the boiling point of water is 100° (212°F).

dependent variable The variable in an experiment that changes in response to changes in the independent variable.

Earth The third planet from the Sun; the planet on which we live.

earthworm A type of worm that lives in and enriches the soil.

ecosystem A community of plants and animals living together in one area.

energy Something that causes change.

environment The area where an organism lives.

erosion The act of carrying away weathered material.

evaporation The process by which a liquid changes to a gas.

exoskeleton The hard outer skin of insects; helps to support and protect their bodies.

fine Composed of small particles.

freezing Removing heat from a liquid until it changes state to a solid.

full Moon The phase in which all of the sunlit side of the Moon is visible from Earth.

gas A state of matter that does not have a definite shape or volume.

humus A part of the soil that contains plant and animal matter in various stages of decomposition.

hypothesis An educated guess about what the answer to the stated problem might be.

independent variable The variable that is not held constant in an experiment.

insulation Material used to keep objects warm or cool.

insulator A type of material or object through which air and heat cannot readily pass.

ladybug A type of beetle that is round and, while often red with black spots, varies considerably in coloration, even within a single species.

liquid A state of matter that has no definite shape but a definite volume.

melting Adding heat to a solid until it changes state to become a liquid.

milliliter (mL) A unit of liquid volume in the metric system.

mineral particles Small parts of weathered rocks.

model A small object that is built to look just like an object whose actual size is much bigger. Models can also be bigger than the objects they represent.

molt To cast off periodically the exoskeleton, or outer covering of the body, as insects must do in order to grow.

Moon The natural satellite that orbits the planet Earth.

moonrise The appearance of the Moon over the eastern horizon, due to the counterclockwise rotation of Earth on its axis.

moonset The disappearance of the Moon over the western horizon, due to the counterclockwise rotation of Earth on its axis.

new Moon The phase in which none of the sunlit side of the Moon is visible from Earth.

orbit The path followed by an object in its revolution around another body. The Moon orbits Earth. Earth orbits the Sun.

organic matter Plant and animal materials in various stages of decomposition that may be part of the soil.

particle A very small amount or piece.

phases Changes in the Moon's appearance caused by changes in the amount of sunlight we see reflected by the Moon as it orbits Earth. The five basic phases are new, crescent, quarter, gibbous, and full.

planet A celestial body that orbits the Sun.

planted soil Soil with vegetation.

pollutant Anything that pollutes the environment.

pollution Contamination of the environment.

predator An animal that hunts and eats other animals.

predict To say what you think, based on previous experience, will probably happen in a certain situation.

prey An animal that is hunted and eaten by other animals.

property A quality, or characteristic, of something.

reproduce To produce offspring and increase the population of a species.

sand A kind of soil made up of very coarse particles.

sandstone A type of rock containing sand.

seed coat The outer covering of a seed that splits open to allow the seed to sprout.

seedling A young plant.

shale A type of rock formed from clay.

shape The form, or outline, of an object.

silt A kind of soil made up of particles that are finer than sand but coarser than clay.

size How big something is; volume.

soil A naturally occurring mixture of minerals, organic material, water, and air that has a definite structure and composition and forms on the surface of the land.

solid A state of matter that maintains its own shape and volume instead of conforming to the shape and volume of its container.

sprout To begin to grow, sending down roots and sending up stems and leaves above ground, as do plants.

star A glowing ball of superheated gases, mostly hydrogen and helium, that produces energy through a nuclear reaction in its core.

states of matter The three conditions a substance can be in: solid, liquid, or gas.

Sun The star at the center of our solar system.

sunrise The appearance of the Sun over the eastern horizon, due to the counterclockwise rotation of Earth on its axis.

sunset The disappearance of the Sun over the western horizon, due to the counterclockwise rotation of Earth on its axis.

temperature The measurement of how hot or how cold something is.

terrarium A container that plants grow in.

thermometer An instrument for measuring temperature in degrees on a scale.

unplanted soil Soil without vegetation.

variable A condition that can change in an experiment.

volume The amount of space a substance takes up.

water cycle The movement of water between the living and nonliving parts of an ecosystem.

water vapor Water in its gaseous state.

weathering The process of breaking down rocks or other materials by the action of water, wind, and living things.

