

# ALL ABOUT ECOSYSTEMS

An **ecosystem** is a community of living things, such as plants and animals, and non-living things like soil and weather, in a specific area. Rainforests and coral reefs are examples of ecosystems that you may already know about!

Ecosystems can be broken down into two different categories—**Aquatic** (in water) and **Terrestrial** (on land). Ecosystems can be very large or very small.

**Biomes** are a collection of ecosystems that have similar weather, rainfall, animals, and plants. There are a number of biomes on Earth:

**Aquatic:** Aquatic biomes can be separated into either freshwater (lakes, streams, rivers and ponds) or marine (oceans, seas, or coral reefs) biomes. Marine biomes have salt water.

THE MARINE BIOME IS  
THE LARGEST BIOME IN  
THE WORLD. IT COVERS  
70% OF THE EARTH!

**Desert:** Deserts can be hot and dry or icy and cold (polar desert). But they all have one thing in common: they get very little rain.

**Forest:** Forests biomes have lots of trees and cover about one-third of the Earth. They can be broken down into tropical rainforests, temperate forests, and taiga (or boreal forests).

**Grassland:** Grassland biomes are open areas of land filled mostly with grasses and wildflowers. There are two groups of grasslands: savanna and temperate grassland. In North America, we call temperate grasslands prairies!

**Tundra:** Tundra is the coldest of all biomes. This biome includes the arctic tundra and the alpine tundra.

In an ecosystem, every plant or animal has their own special role to play, and each organism's role affects all of the others. A healthy ecosystem is dependant on a balance among all living things and the environment. If something disturbs the balance, the ecosystem and all its members may suffer. Human activities that can disturb ecosystems include pollution, deforestation, land development, or removing too many natural resources like water.



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Fill in the blanks using the words below.

AQUATIC	ECOSYSTEM	MARINE
BIOME	FRESHWATER	TUNDRA
DESERT	FOREST	WEATHER
	GRASSLANDS	

1. An \_\_\_\_\_ is all of the living and non-living things in a specific area.
2. Reefs, oceans, and seas are examples of \_\_\_\_\_ ecosystems.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the coldest type of biome.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is an example of a non-living thing that can be found in an ecosystem.
5. Lakes, rivers, and ponds are examples of \_\_\_\_\_ ecosystems.
6. Tropical rainforests are a type of \_\_\_\_\_ ecosystem.
7. Water ecosystems belong to the \_\_\_\_\_ biome.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is dry area that can be either hot or cold.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ are open areas of land filled with low growing plants such as grasses and wildflowers.
10. A collection of ecosystems that are similar is called a \_\_\_\_\_.

