

What are Ecosystems? *Learning Guide*

Elementary Science



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Pause and Review

Label the pictures as living or nonliving things.



clouds



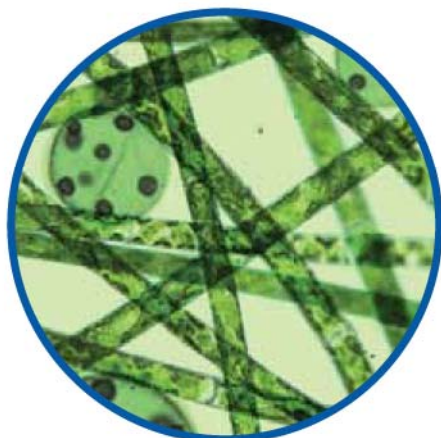
soil



ducks



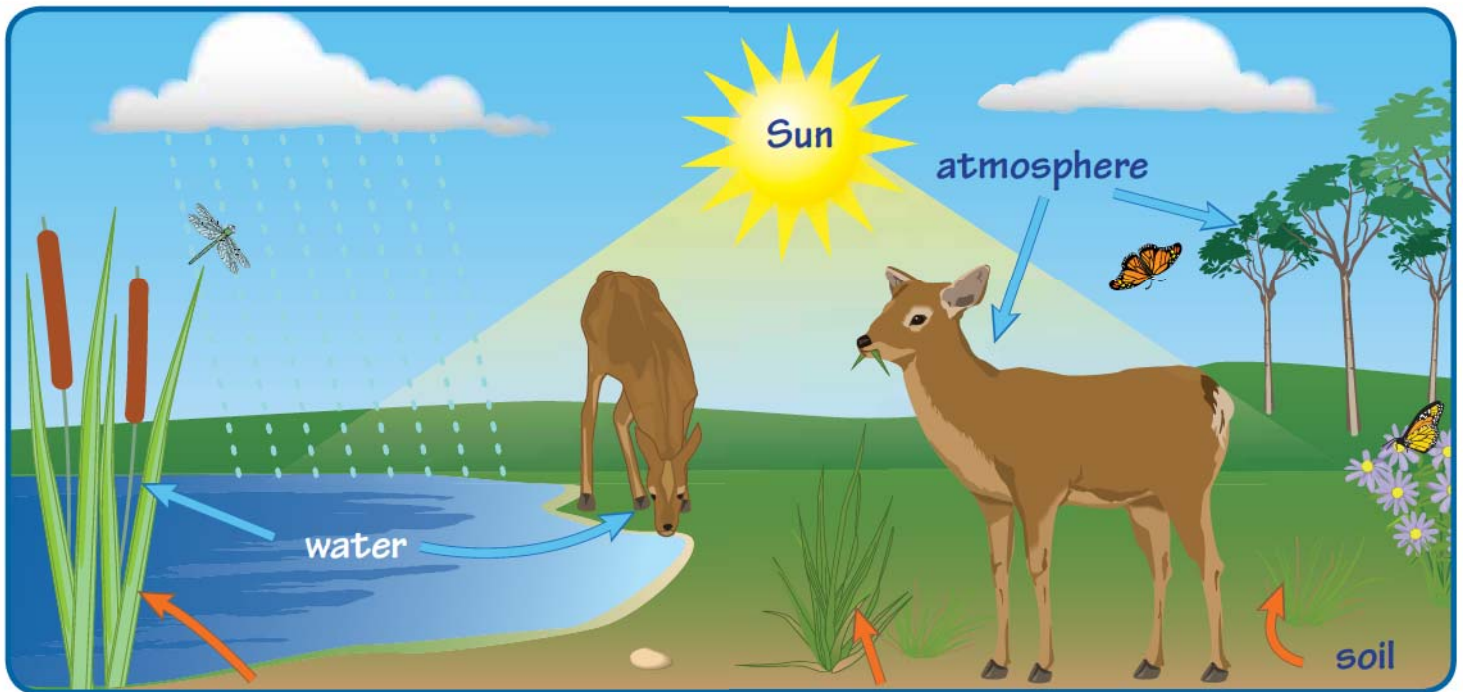
rocks



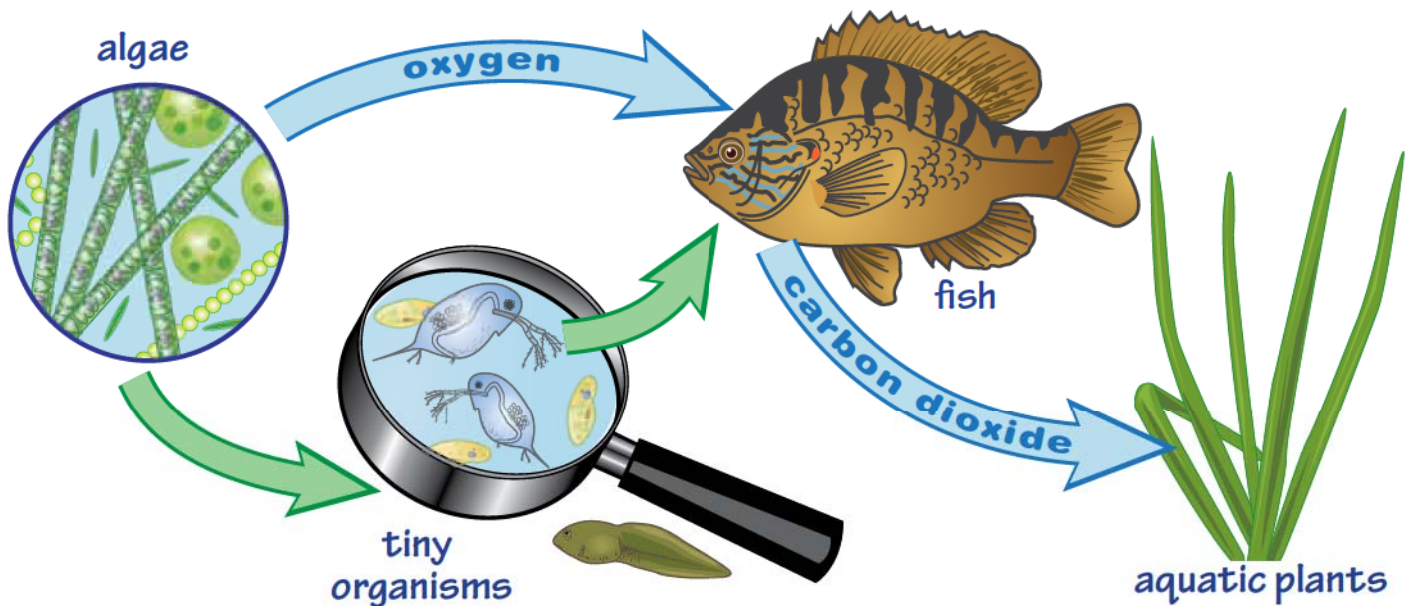
algae



lily pads



An **ecosystem** includes **soil**, **atmosphere**, heat and light from the Sun, water and living organisms. Soil provides **nutrients** for the plants. The atmosphere provides **oxygen** and **carbon dioxide** for both plants and animals. The Sun provides heat for plants and animals, and light for plants to make food. Water is part of all living organisms; without water there would be no life.



The living organisms in an **ecosystem** depend on other living organisms but also on nonliving things for survival. For example, in a pond ecosystem, the Sun light helps **algae** grow. Algae make **oxygen** for the fish and also provide food for tiny pond organisms. The fish eat the tiny pond organisms, use the oxygen, and give out **carbon dioxide** which plants need to grow.

KINDS OF ECOSYSTEMS

There are many kinds of **ecosystems**. Each ecosystem has its own unique group of **living** and **nonliving things**. Examples of different kinds of ecosystems include **wetlands**, **coral reefs**, **prairies** and **deserts**. Many factors, such as **climate**, **soil** and type of water, determine the kinds of plants and animals that can live there.



coral reef



desert



prairie



wetlands

LAB INVESTIGATION - ANSWER KEY

Desert

C. sand, air, the Sun

Cactus

1. A. a producer
2. D. none of the above, it makes its own food

Beetle

1. C. a decomposer
2. D. detritus (dead organisms)

Rattlesnake

1. B. a consumer
2. B. lizards

Kangaroo rat

1. B. a consumer
2. A. plants

Gecko

1. B. a consumer
2. A. insects

Forest

D. the Sun, air, soil

Deer

1. B. a consumer
2. A. plants

Trees

1. A. a producer
2. D. none of the above, it makes its own food

Squirrel

1. B. a consumer
2. C. nuts and seeds

Woodpecker

1. B. a consumer
2. B. insects

Mushrooms

1. C. a decomposer
2. D. none of the above

Pond

C. the Sun, water, soil

Frog

1. B. a consumer
2. A. insects

Fish

1. B. a consumer
2. C. insects

Snail

1. C. a decomposer
2. C. detritus (dead organisms)

Dragonfly

1. B. a consumer
2. C. other insects

Aquatic plants

1. A. a producer
2. D. none of the above, it makes its own food

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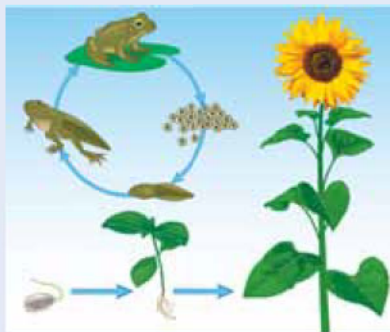
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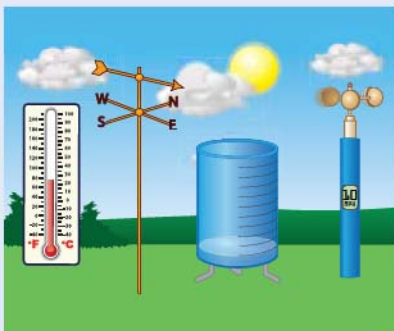
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