

# Unit 12 Vocabulary

## Ecosystems

1. **Ecosystem** – a community of living and non-living things that work together.
2. **Succession** – the normal, gradual changes that occur in the types of species that live in an area.
3. **Primary Succession** – begins in areas with no life at all, may take hundreds or thousands of years to reach Climax Community.
4. **Secondary Succession** – succession that begins in a place that already has soil and was once home to living things – occurs after a fire for example – may take 100 years or more.
5. **Pioneer Species** – species (living thing) that is first to establish itself in an area where nothing is growing.

**6. Climax Community** – a community that has reached a stable stage of ecological succession.

**7. Biome** – large geographic areas that have similar climates and ecosystems.

**8. Tundra** – cold, dry, treeless region, sometimes called a cold desert.

**9. Taiga** – cold, forest region dominated by cone-bearing evergreen trees.

**10. Deciduous Forest** – forest with 4 distinct seasons, leaves change colors in autumn and trees lose leaves in winter.

**11. Temperate Rain Forest** – forest dominated by trees with needle-like leaves.

**12. Tropical Rain Forest** – forest near the equator, warm temperature year round, wet weather, very lush plant growth.

13. **Desert** – the driest biome on Earth, support very little plant life.
14. **Grasslands** – dominated by communities of grasses, most have a dry season preventing the development of forests.
15. **Freshwater Ecosystems** – consist of rivers, streams, lakes, ponds.
16. **Saltwater Ecosystems** – consist of oceans, coral reefs, seashores, estuaries.
17. **Wetlands** – regions that are wet for all or most of the year.
18. **Coral Reef** – often called the “rain forest of the sea”, home to many forms of marine life – formed from calcium carbonate secreted by animals called corals.
19. **Corals** – colonies of tiny animals found in marine

**water.**

**20. Intertidal Zone – portions of shoreline that is covered with water at high tide and exposed to air during low tide.**

**21. Estuaries – area where a river meets an ocean and contains a mixture of freshwater and saltwater.**