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| **Glossary** |  |
| **Chapter 7** |  |
| **biome** | Terrestrial regions inhabited by certain types of life, especially vegetation. Examples include various types of deserts, grasslands, and forests. |
| **broadleaf deciduous plants** | Plants such as oak and maple trees that survive drought and cold by shedding their leaves and becoming dormant. Compare broadleaf evergreen plants, coniferous evergreen plants. |
| **broadleaf evergreen plants** | Plants that keep most of their broad leaves year-round. An example is the trees found in the canopies of tropical rain forests. Compare broadleaf deciduous plants, coniferous evergreen plants. |
| **climate** | Physical properties of the troposphere of an area based on analysis of its weather records over a long period (at least 30 years). The two main factors determining an area's climate are its average temperature, with its seasonal variations, and the average amount and distribution of precipitation. Compare weather. |
| **coniferous evergreen plants** | Cone-bearing plants (such as spruces, pines, and firs) that keep some of their narrow, pointed leaves (needles) all year. Compare broadleaf deciduous plants, broad-leaf evergreen plants. |
| **coniferous trees** | Cone-bearing trees, mostly evergreens, that have needle-shaped or scalelike leaves. They produce wood known commercially as softwood. Compare deciduous plants. |
| **desert** | Biome in which evaporation exceeds precipitation and the average amount of precipitation is less than 25 centimeters (10 inches) per year. Such areas have little vegetation or have widely spaced, mostly low vegetation. Compare forest, grassland. |
| **elevation** | Distance above sea level. |
| **global warming** | Warming of the earth's lower atmosphere (troposphere) because of increases in the concentrations of one or more greenhouse gases. It can result in climate change that can last for decades to thousands of years. See greenhouse effect, greenhouse gases, natural greenhouse effect. |
| **grassland** | Biome found in regions where there is enough annual average precipitation to support the growth of grass and small plants but not enough to support large stands of trees. Compare desert, forest. |
| **greenhouse effect** | Natural effect that releases heat in the atmosphere near the earth's surface. Water vapor, carbon dioxide, ozone, and other gases in the lower atmosphere (troposphere) absorb some of the infrared radiation (heat) radiated by the earth's surface. Their molecules vibrate and transform the absorbed energy into longer-wavelength infrared radiation in the troposphere. If the atmospheric concentrations of these greenhouse gases increase and other natural processes do not remove them, the average temperature of the lower atmosphere will increase. Compare global warming. |
| **latitude** | Distance from the equator. Compare altitude. |
| **ocean currents** | Mass movements of surface water produced by prevailing winds blowing over the oceans. |
| **prairie** | Biome found in regions where there is enough annual average precipitation to support the growth of grass and small plants but not enough to support large stands of trees. Compare desert, forest. See grassland. |
| **rain shadow effect** | Low precipitation on the leeward side of a mountain when prevailing winds flow up and over a high mountain or range of high mountains, creating semiarid and arid conditions on the leeward side of a high mountain range. |
| **terrestrial** | Pertaining to land. Compare aquatic. |
| **watt** | Unit of power, or rate at which electrical work is done. See kilowatt. |

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