

Name: _____

Date: _____

● What is ecology? Reading Passage

WHAT IS ECOLOGY?

Ecology is the study of the environment. It involves studying how living things interact with each other. It also involves studying how living things interact with nonliving things. Ecologists are scientists who study ecology. They study the diversity of organisms in an environment and how nutrients, energy and materials cycle through the environment. They study how environments develop and how weather and climate influence environments as well.

Ecologists use important terms that you should be familiar with to better understand ecology and the environment. An **environment** is the surroundings in which an organism lives and includes living and nonliving things. A **habitat** is the environment in which an individual organism lives. In other words, a habitat is an organism's home. An **ecosystem** is a community of living things interacting with the nonliving parts of their environment. In other words, it includes living organisms together with the nonliving parts of the environment. The nonliving parts make up the physical features of the environment.

A **species** is a group of similar organisms. These organisms are so similar that they can breed and reproduce fertile offspring. Fertile offspring are organisms that are capable of reproducing a new generation of organisms. A **population** is a group of individuals of the same species that live in the same area. Ecologists study populations to learn how members of the same species interact with each other. They can also study how populations interact with each other in an environment.

Questions

1. What is ecology?
2. What kind of things do ecologists study?
3. What is the difference between a habitat and ecosystem?
4. What is the difference between a species and a population?
5. If you were an ecologist, what would you study? Explain.

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● What is ecology? Answer Sheet

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