

Glossary

Biodegradable Describes a material that can be broken down or decomposed by bacteria or other living organisms.

Car-sharing service A system in which people can rent cars for short periods of time from a pool of vehicles.

Carbon dioxide A gas which is produced by all animals when they breathe out and by plants during photosynthesis. It is also created when materials that contain carbon, such as coal, are burned.

Charity An organization that raises money for those in need.

Clean energy Energy that is created from renewable sources such as from sunlight, wind, or water. Also known as renewable energy.

Climate change The long-term changes in the Earth's weather patterns.

Decompose To decay or become rotten. Leaves and dead plant material decompose into soil.

Diesel A kind of fuel that is used in diesel vehicles.

Drought A long period of low rainfall, which leads to a shortage of water.

Eco-friendly Describes something that does not harm the environment.

Emission A discharge of something such as a gas or fumes. Greenhouse gases are described as an emission.

Endangered Describes something that is in a dangerous situation. An endangered animal is at risk of becoming extinct or dying out as a species.

Ethical Something that is moral or right. Ethical products are usually green, organic, energy efficient, or fair trade.

Extinct If a species of an animal has died out then that animal is described as extinct.

Fire regulations Rules about fire safety that must be followed.

Fossil fuel A nonrenewable natural fuel, such as coal, oil, or gas, that was created long ago from the remains of living things.

Geothermal power Electricity produced using steam from hot water wells deep underground.

Global warming The rise in temperature of Earth that is causing long-term climate change.

Greenhouse gases Gases in Earth's atmosphere that trap radiation from the sun and cause global warming.

Heatwave A long period of very hot weather.

Hydropower Electricity generated from turbines that are turned by the force of fast-moving water.

Incinerate To burn something to ash.

Incinerator A machine that burns waste material at a high temperature.

Infrared camera A camera that forms thermal images from heat rather than from visible light. This means infrared cameras can be used in the dark.

Landfill site A place where waste or garbage is disposed of in the ground.



Find Out More

Methane gas A natural gas that leaks from landfill sites as trash decomposes. It can be used as a fuel but it is also a greenhouse gas.

Microbeads Tiny, solid plastic particles that are regularly used in cosmetics and cleaning products. These are washed away down our sinks but end up back in lakes and oceans causing problems for marine life.

Microplastics Small plastic pieces or particles caused when household or industrial plastics begin to break down or disintegrate.

Natural resources Materials such as water, soil, coal, and wood that are found in nature.

Nectar The sweet substance secreted by flowers and collected or eaten by insects.

Pollinate To transfer pollen to a plant or flower for fertilization.

Preservatives Chemicals that are used to make food last longer.

Renewable energy Energy that is generated from sources like sunlight, wind, or water.

Solar power The conversion of energy from sunlight into electricity.

Sustainable Something that can be used in the present time and be easily replaced so that it can be used in the future too.

Toxin A poisonous substance.

Upcycling Reusing something and turning it into something better.

Zero waste To achieve zero waste you must make sure to reuse and recycle everything that you consume. The goal is that nothing that you use is sent to landfills.

The Freecycle Network

freecycle.org

The global network of community-based reuse and recycling projects. The idea is that people can give away unwanted items and acquire items they need for free.

Friends of the Earth

foe.org

This international organization is working on a global scale to help protect our world. You can join campaigns like Save the Bees and many others to do your bit for a greener world.

Greenpeace

greenpeace.org

This worldwide charity has been actively involved with green causes since it was started in 1971. Today, among other campaigns, it is working toward stopping climate change, defending the oceans from plastic pollution, protecting rainforests, and saving the Arctic.

NOVA

pbs.org/wgbh/nova/topic/earth

Learn more about our amazing planet from this PBS website for the TV series NOVA. It offers recent episodes and articles about topics related to planet Earth.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

epa.gov/recycle

This website from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) gives lots of information on how to recycle as well as how to reduce and reuse.

WaterAid

wateraid.org

This international organization works around the world to supply clean water, proper sanitation, and good hygiene to communities that need help.