

Glossary

abiotic the non-living part of an ecosystem, such as soil

abrasion the wearing away of cliffs by sediment thrown by breaking waves

abstraction the removal of water from the ground, rivers or lakes so that it can be used by people

accessibility how easy it is to get to and from a place

active layer the seasonally thawed surface layer above permafrost

adult literacy rate the number of adults in a country who can read and write (usually expressed as a percentage)

afforestation planting of trees on a large scale

agribusiness a large farm or group of farms organised and managed efficiently to make as much profit as possible

aid the giving of money, expertise or technology by one country to another to help development

appropriate technology a level of equipment and machinery that people can understand easily and does not cost too much (see *intermediate technology*)

aquifer a layer of rock that contains groundwater

arête sharp razor like ridge formed between two corries

attrition erosion caused by rocks transported by waves that bump into each other and break into smaller pieces

autotroph a plant that uses sunlight, nutrients and water to grow (sometimes called producers)

basal slip a glacier sliding over the bed due to meltwater under the ice acting as a lubricant

biodiversity the number and variety of species found within an ecosystem

biomass the weight of living matter (all the plants and animals) in a given area; organic matter used as fuel in a power station

biome a large-scale global ecosystem, such as a tropical rainforest (see large-scale global ecosystem)

biotic the living part of an ecosystem, such as plants

birth rate the number of live births in a year within a population of an area (usually expressed out of one thousand people)

boulder clay clay containing many large stones and boulders, formed by deposition from melting glaciers and ice sheets.

bulldozing when ice in a glacier pushes loose material in front of it

canopy a layer of trees within a forest ecosystem

carbon footprint the amount of carbon dioxide produced by a person, household or business

climate the long-term patterns of average precipitation and temperature, including hot and cold seasons or wet and dry seasons, for an area

climate change a significant change in the expected long-term patterns of average precipitation and temperature for an area; this may be a natural change or due to human activities

colonial expansion the historical takeover of overseas territories by a powerful country, usually for economic benefit

commercial farming the growing of crops or rearing of livestock to make money

constructive wave waves that build up beaches by pushing sand and pebbles further up the beach

consumer a person, or group of people, who buys or uses things; or in an ecosystem, a creature that eats plants or other creatures

container port a place where ships designed to carry large metal containers can dock to load or offload cargo. Containers are a standard size so that they can be transferred from ships to rail or lorries

corrasion acids contained in sea water will dissolve some types of rock such as chalk or limestone

corrie hollow formed in a mountainside by glacial erosion, rotational slip and freeze-thaw weathering. It is where a glacier begins. A small circular lake called a tarn is left when the ice melts