

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE HIT PARADE

These are all environmental science terms you should know cold before exam day, so make flashcards, cut these out, study them in your sleep—do whatever you have to do to commit them to memory before exam day!

## CHAPTER 3: EARTH'S INTERDEPENDENT SYSTEMS

**abiotic**—Pertaining to factors or things that are separate and independent from living things; nonliving.

**abyssal zone**—This is the deepest region of the ocean. This zone is marked by extremely cold temperatures and very low levels of dissolved oxygen, but very high levels of nutrients because of the decaying plant and animal matter that falls from the zones above.

**acid**—Any compound that releases hydrogen ions when dissolved in water. Also, a water solution that contains a surplus of hydrogen ions.

**active volcano**—a volcano that is currently erupting or has erupted within recorded history.

**aggregate**—crowded or massed into a dense cluster.

**air mass**—enormous bodies of air that move as a unit.

**A layer**—a soil horizon; the layer below the O layer is called the A layer. The A layer is formed of weathered rock, with some organic material; often referred to as topsoil.

**alkaline**—a basic substance; chemically, a substance that absorbs hydrogen ions or releases hydroxyl ions; in reference to natural water, a measure of the base content of the water.

**aquifer**—an underground layer of porous rock, sand, or other material that allows the movement of water between layers of nonporous rock or clay. Aquifers are frequently tapped for wells.

**arable**—land that's fit to be cultivated.

**asthenosphere**—the part of the mantle that lies just below the lithosphere.

**atmosphere**—the gaseous mass or envelope surrounding a celestial body, especially the one surrounding the Earth, which is retained by the celestial body's gravitational field.

**barrier island**—a long, relatively narrow island running parallel to the mainland, built up by the action of waves and currents and serving to protect the coast from erosion by surf and tidal surges.

**bathyal zone**—the steep descent of the seabed from the continental shelf to the abyssal zone.

**benthic zone**—the deepest layer in a body of water; characterized by very low temperatures and low oxygen levels.