Vocabulary

Secondary Level

arid — a dry climate with very little rainfall, high evaporation, and little vegetation

chlorophyll — the green pigment in plants that captures the energy of light so that this energy can be utilized by the plant

drought — a dry period or length of time with low rainfall

epiphytes — plants which grow on the limbs or trunks of other plants, deriving their nourishment from decomposing litter and capturing water that rushes by on the branches during rainfall

evaporation — loss of water as vapor, straight into the air

evergreen — plants that keep leaves during all seasons of the year — leaves still fall, but gradually, not all at once

deciduous — as opposed to evergreen, these trees shed their leaves all at the same time — usually during a harsh (cold or dry) season

microclimate — the climate for a small area or zone within a larger climate area, such as the microclimate on the shaded, north side of a house or on the exposed, sunny side of a tree trunk

photosynthesis — the process in plants by which the sun's energy (light energy) is captured by chlorophyll and converted to chemical energy that is stored in sugars, by combining carbon dioxide (CO_2) and water (H_2O) to make sugars ($C_6H_{12}O_6$) and release oxygen (O_2): $6CO_2 + 6H_2O$ + light energy —> $C_6H_{12}O_6 + 6CO_2$

respiration — the process in living organisms by which sugars ($C_6H_{12}O_6$) are combined with oxygen (O_2) to form carbon dioxide (CO_2) and water (H_2O), and to release energy for the organisms' use in growth, etc.: $C_6H_{12}O_6 + 6O_2$ —> $6CO_2 + 6H_2O$ + energy

succulence — having juicy or watery tissues, as in most cacti

xerophytes — plants native to dry areas, and with special forms and habits that allow them to grow under extreme conditions of climate with limited water supply