

abrasion

the wearing away of rock chiefly by currents of water carrying sand and other rock debris and by glaciers

algal bloom

a rapid increase in population, especially of algae, that brings about the discolouration of the water in which they are growing

aquifer

a permeable layer of rock capable of yielding quantities of ground water to wells and springs. Such as in the Great Artesian Basin

atmosphere

the mixture of gases surrounding the Earth's surface

autotroph

a living thing that can supply its own food

biosphere	the parts of the Earth (air, land and water) where living organisms can be found
chemical weathering	a type of weathering where rocks and minerals are changed into new, fairly stable chemicals by dissolving and chemical reactions
conservation	the act of preserving for future generations our natural resources, especially plants and animals, and their environment
desiccation	drying out
eutrophication	the process by which bodies of water, such as lakes, become enriched with dissolved nutrients; this may result in much growth of algae and other organisms with an equivalent drop in dissolved oxygen

gamma radiation

the part of the electromagnetic spectrum with the shortest wavelength

glacier

a large mass of moving ice that gouges large amounts of rock and soil from the ground beneath

heterotroph

an organism that is unable to make its own food and thus depends on other organisms as a source of food

hydrological (water) cycle

the complete cycle through which water passes from the oceans, through the atmosphere, to the land and back to the ocean

hydrosphere

all liquid and frozen surface waters, ground water held in soil and rock and atmospheric water vapour

ice wedging

when water freezes to form ice, it expands and the ice acts like a wedge to force open cracks in the rock

joint

a crack in a rock where neither side has moved relative to the other

lithosphere

solid mantle and crust of the earth

mechanical weathering

the process of weathering during which physical forces, such as abrasion by particles in moving water or ice, break down or reduce a rock to smaller and smaller fragments, involving no chemical change

non-portable water

water not suitable for drinking, cooking or bathing

pathogen

a disease-causing
organism

pollution

the addition of materials to the environment (such as air, water and soil) that harm organisms that normally live there under natural conditions

precipitation

any or all of the forms of water, whether liquid or solid, that fall from the atmosphere and reach the ground, such as rain, hail and snow

tailing

sediments left over
after mining

turbidity

the cloudy or hazy appearance of water caused by the suspension of clays or other fine particles

water table

the surface beneath
ground level between
the zones of saturation
and of aeration
