

# CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

## LEARNING CONCEPTS

This glossary provides terms and definitions to help you understand the basics of climate change and what we can do. Give it a read!



## A

### **Active Transportation**

Using human power to travel. Examples include walking and biking.

### **Agricultural Biodiversity**

The variety and variability of living organisms, like plants, animals, and microorganisms, that are related to food and agriculture.

### **Anthropogenic Climate Change**

Human-caused changes to our climate. Humans change our climate through certain activities that influence Earth's natural greenhouse effect, like the burning of fossil fuels.

### **Atmosphere**

The layer of air that surrounds the Earth.

## C

### **Carbon Footprint**

The amount of carbon dioxide one individual will release into the environment.

### **Climate**

The average weather conditions in a region over many years.

### **Climate Change**

A significant change in average climate patterns in a region over a long time. It can be identified by long-lasting changes in temperature, rainfall, and wind. Climate change occurs through natural processes on Earth and human activities.

### **Companion Planting**

The close planting of different species of plants for mutual benefit.

### **Composting**

A form of waste disposal where natural, organic material (like decaying plants) is used to add nutrients to the soil and divert waste from landfills.

## **Conservation Tillage**

To reduce soil erosion through low-till or no-till practices.

## **Cover Cropping**

Plants are grown to cover the soil in between growing seasons.

## **Crop Rotation**

The successive growing of different crops on the same field.

## **E**

### **Emissions**

When substances, particularly gases, are released into our atmosphere. They are measured by their concentration or parts per million.

## **F**

### **Food Security**

When all people have physical, social, and economic access to safe and nutritious food for a healthy life.

### **Food System**

The complex set activities related to the production, processing, transportation, distribution, purchasing, consumption, and disposal of food.

### **Food Waste**

Food that is thrown out that was intended to be eaten. It can be caused by stocking up on too much food, inappropriate packaging, and by disposing food scraps into the garbage bin (rather than the organic bin).

### **Fossil Fuel**

A fuel like oil, coal and natural gas formed from fossils of organisms that lived long ago. They are often burned for electricity, heat, and transportation. This emits greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide.

## G

### **Global Warming**

An increase in Earth's average temperature over a long time.

### **Greenhouse Effect**

A natural process that helps to maintain a comfortable temperature for life on Earth. Greenhouse gases trap some of the sun's energy to warm Earth's surface. Some of the other heat is released back into space.

### **Greenhouse Gases**

The heat-trapping gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect. Some of the main greenhouse gases are water vapour, carbon dioxide, and methane.

## N

### **Nonrenewable Energy**

Energy from resources in limited supply, like coal, oil, and natural gas.

## P

### **Pollution**

The contamination of the environment by chemicals and harmful substances.

## R

### **Recycle**

To collect, treat, and regain material for use.

### **Reduce**

To reduce in size or quantity. For example, you could buy only the amount of something you will use.

### **Refuse**

To try to avoid accepting something you do not need. For example, bringing a reusable bag instead of taking a plastic one.

## **Renewable Energy**

Energy from resources that will replace themselves naturally, like wind, water, and sunshine.

## **Reuse**

To use once again. For example, an old jar could be used again for storing something.

## **Rot**

To compost where possible.

## **S**

## **Sink**

A place where a greenhouse gas is taken up and removed from the atmosphere.

## **Source**

An activity that releases a greenhouse gas into the atmosphere.

## **Sustainability**

The ability to meet near-term human needs and recognize long-term limits.

## **T**

## **Tillage**

The preparation of soil for growing crops, often using mechanical tools.

## **V**

## **Vulnerability**

In the context of climate change, vulnerability is the extent to which a system is susceptible to or unable to cope with impacts.

## W

### **Weather**

The condition of the atmosphere in a specific place over a short time (minutes to hours or days)

## X

### **Xeriscaping**

Gardening with minimal water use. This could involve using drought-resistant plants.