

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

G101 Theme 3 - Natural Resource Depletion

CARRYING CAPACITY

The maximum population size of a species (human or otherwise) that an environment can sustain indefinitely with its natural resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Action taken by individuals or groups to address or persuade others to address environmental concerns. It can take many forms such as direct action to conserve or restore the environment, writing letters, campaigning, petitioning, rallies, strikes, protests.

ENVIRONMENTAL APOCALYPSE

A view that humans are on course to destroy the natural world unless measures are put in place to protect, conserve and limit our use and exploitation of environments.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Refers to the conservation of the environment through protection from harm. Implies sustainable use of environmental resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Refers to any activity to maintain or restore the quality of the natural environment. This can be achieved at different scales from individuals to governments.

FINITE RESOURCES

Resources that can be utilised but cannot be replaced (and will eventually run out) e.g. coal, gas and oil. Often described as non-renewables.

FOSSIL FUELS

A hydrocarbon deposit, such as petroleum, coal or natural gas, derived from living matter of a previous geologic time and used for fuel.

HOMOCENTRIST (AKA ANTHROPOCENTRIST)

The view that the environment and nature exists primarily to serve human needs along with the implication that the environment may be exploited justifiably in the interests of the human population.

NATURAL RESOURCES

A naturally occurring biological or non-biological material, such as food, timber, fresh water, or a mineral deposit, that has value to a population in terms of sustaining its needs (eg physical, economic). May be renewable or non-renewable.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO)

NGO's are mostly non-profit making organisations that operate independently of government for some social or political purpose, such as providing a service, running development projects or promoting a cause. In some cases they may be partly or wholly publicly funded.

OPTIMIST

A person who tends to expect favourable outcomes (eg from a particular course of action or set of circumstances).

OPTIMUM POPULATION

The population is such that it matches the resources available to sustain it. It can exist at different scales (local, national, international, global) and implies that, given an appropriate distribution of access to resources, quality of life for a population can be maximised and the environment sustained.

OVER POPULATION

The resources cannot sustain the current population for a defined area. As long as there is over population quality of life will decline and/or the environment will be degraded.

PESSIMIST

A person who tends to expect unfavourable outcomes (eg from a particular course of action or set of circumstances).

POPULATION POLICY

A deliberate attempt by government to influence the population of a country for economic, environmental or other reasons. A government may try to encourage or discourage population growth through promoting its view or by fiscal and other legislative measures.

SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) denotes an environmentally protected area in the UK which has unique or rare qualities/features in terms of wildlife or geology.

UNDER POPULATION

The population in a defined area cannot fully utilise the resources available. An increase in population could lead to an increase in quality of life through a more efficient/effective use of resources and the ability to provide a range of public services.