

Vocabulary: Carbon Cycle



Vocabulary

- **Atmosphere** – the gases that surround a planet.
 - Earth's atmosphere consists of nitrogen (78%), oxygen (21%), argon (1%), and smaller amounts of other gases, including carbon dioxide and methane.
- **Biomass** – the total mass of a group of living things.
 - The animal species with the greatest biomass may be Antarctic krill, a small, shrimp-like organism.
 - The biomass of Antarctic krill is about 500 million metric tons. (One metric ton is equal to 1,000 kg, or 2,205 lbs.)
- **Biosphere** – living things on a planet.
 - Earth's biosphere contains plants, animals, fungi, protists, and bacteria.
- **Carbon reservoir** – a part of Earth that stores carbon.
 - Examples of carbon reservoirs include the atmosphere, the ocean, soils, sediments, and the biosphere.
- **Carbon sink** – a carbon reservoir that absorbs carbon from the atmosphere and stores it for a long period of time.
- **Fossil fuel** – a fuel formed over thousands or millions of years from the remains of living organisms.
 - Fossil fuels include coal, natural gas, and petroleum (oil).
- **Geosphere** – the rocky, non-living parts of a planet.
 - Earth's geosphere contains rocks, sediments, and soil.
- **Greenhouse gas** – a gas in Earth's atmosphere that absorbs and then re-radiates heat.
 - Examples of greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide and methane.
- **Hydrosphere** – the water on a planet.
 - About 97% of Earth's water is found in oceans. The rest is found in glaciers, groundwater, lakes, and rivers.
- **Lithosphere** – the rigid upper layer of the Earth.
 - The lithosphere consists of the crust and the upper part of the mantle.
- **Photosynthesis** – a process in which plants use energy from light to change carbon dioxide and water into glucose (sugar) and oxygen.



Antarctic krill