

# Thesaurus of Environmental Education Terms

for use in  
Electronic Database Searching



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## Database Search Language for Environmental Educators

**Note:** these terms are the terms commonly used by ERIC/CSMEE and ENC, this is not an exhaustive list and is by no means the only list of search language available. It is intended as a guideline for educators.

| Term                    | Definition  | See Also                              | Related Terms   |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Environment             | surrounding conditions, forces or factors potentially capable of influencing, modifying or interacting with an organism, material or other entity (use a more specific term if possible)          | physical environment                  | conservation (environment), ecology, environmental education, environmental influences, environmental research, humanization, resources, environmental factors  |
| Environmental Education |   | conservation education                | adventure education, biological sciences, conservation (environment), ecology, energy education, environment, forestry, global education, marine education, natural resources, outdoor education, population education, science and society, social biology, soil conservation, sustainable development, wilderness |
| Adventure Education     | type of outdoor education that attempts to teach environmental awareness and build self confidence through activities that involve risk or stress, such as rock climbing, survival training, etc. | Adventure learning, outdoor education | experiential learning, field experience learning, field trips, outdoor activities, risk, self concept, trails, wilderness   |

| <b>Term</b>                 | <b>Definition</b>  | <b>See Also</b>                             | <b>Related Terms</b>   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Outdoor Education           | utilization of the outdoor environment to promote experiential learning and enrich the curriculum  | adventure education                         | conservation education, experiential learning, field trips, interdisciplinary approach, outdoor activities, rural education, summer programs, trails, wilderness |
| Acid Rain                   | Precipitation containing destructive acid concentration. Caused when pollutants, chiefly oxides of Sulphur and Nitrogen are chemically combined with water vapors in the atmosphere. | Air pollution, water pollution              | meteorology, water quality   |
| Action Learning             | learning by doing . . . includes knowledge and skills acquired outside of book/lecture learning situations through work, play and other life experiences                             | experiential learning, community experience | activity learning, activity units, discovery learning  |
| Action Research             | research designed to yield practical results that are immediately applicable to a specific situation or problem  | participatory action research               | community action, evaluation methods, participatory research   |
| Adjustment (to environment) | a condition of harmonious relation to the environment, in which internal needs are satisfied and external demands are met  | adaptability                                | ecology, environment, health   |
| Advocacy                    | full and active support for and representation of an individual group, cause or idea   | environmental advocacy                      | citizen participation, needs services, social action   |

| <b>Term</b>       | <b>Definition</b>   | <b>See Also</b>                                    | <b>Related Terms</b>  |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Aesthetics        | branch of philosophy dealing with beauty, artistic expression, and physiological responses to beauty and art including nature                           | nature   | aesthetic values, discipline based art education                            |
| Air Pollution     |   | air pollution control, atmospheric pollution, SMOG | climate, conservation, ecology, environmental standards, greenhouse effects |
| Awareness         | the process of becoming aware of objects, qualities or relations via the senses – involves the reception, processing, and interpretation of impressions | perceptions  | comprehension, discovery processes, inferences                              |
| Behavior Change   | complete or partial alteration in the observable responses  | attitude change                                    | behavior, change strategies   |
| Built Environment | all buildings, monuments, roadways, landscapes, etc   | physical environment                               | community characteristics, environmental influences                         |
| Camping           |   | recreational activities                            | adventure education, outdoor activities, trails, wilderness                 |

| <b>Term</b>                             | <b>Definition</b>   | <b>See Also</b>                                      | <b>Related Terms</b>   |
|---|---|--|--|
| Climate                                 | the prevailing conditions of the physical environment indoor or outdoor                             | climactic factors (1969, 1980), physical environment | air pollution, climate change, climate control, diffusion (physics), earth science, ecology, environmental influences, geographic location, heat, humidity, light, meteorology, pollution, solar energy, temperature, thermal environment, water, weather, wind (meteorology)  |
| Climate Change                          | non-seasonal, semipermanent change in the physical environment of a region                          | global warming                                       | climate, environmental influences, meteorology   |
| Community education for the environment | extending existing education resources and programs into the community                              | education  | community, community centers, community development, community resources, extension education, outreach programs   |
| Conservation (environment)              | preservation and protection of the environment including natural resources from loss, waste or harm | energy conservation, soil conservation               | air pollution, conservation education, depleted resources, ecological factors, ecology, endangered species, environment, environmental education, forestry, fuel consumption natural resources, recycling, sustainable development, wastes, water pollution, water quality, water resources, wetlands, wilderness, wildlife management |
| Conservation Education                  |   | environmental education                              | conservation, energy conservation, energy education, forestry, natural resources, outdoor education, soil conservation, trials, wilderness, wetlands   |

| <b>Term</b>              | <b>Definition</b>   | <b>See Also</b>  | <b>Related Terms</b>  |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| Curriculum Development   | activities such as conceptualizing, planning, implementing, field testing, and researching that are intended to produce new or improved curricula | curriculum adaptation, curriculum improvement, educational development | course content, curriculum, curriculum based assessments, instructional development, material development, media adaptation   |
| Decision Making Skills   |   | skills   | daily living skills, decision making, problem solving, thinking skills  |
| Energy Conservation      | preventing loss or waste of energy  | heat recovery, conservation (environment)                              | alternative energy sources, climate control, conservation education, depleted resources, ecological factors, ecology, energy, energy audits, energy education, energy management, energy occupations, fuel consumption, fuels, life cycle costing, motor vehicles, natural resources, thermal insulation, underground facilities, water resources |
| Environmental Influences | influences of the physical environment  |  | biological influences climate, climate change, climate control, crowding, environmental research, hazardous materials, physical environment, pollution, radiation effects, sanitation, thermal environment, weather   |
| Environmental Research   | study of the physical environment   |  | environmental influences, physical environment, scientific research, use “studies”  |

| Term                       | Definition  | See Also                               | Related Terms   |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Environmental Standards    | laws, rules or regulations relating to the quality of the physical environment                      | standards                              | environmental criteria. Air pollution, ecology, energy audits, energy management, hazardous materials, motor vehicles, noise (sound), occupational safety and health, pests, physical environment, poisons, pollution, public health, quality of life, waste disposal, water pollution, water quality   |
| Conservation (environment) | preservation and protection of the environment including natural resources from loss, waste or harm | energy conservation, soil conservation | soil conservation, air pollution, conservation education, depleted resources, ecological factors, ecology, endangered species, environment, environmental education, forestry, fuel consumption natural resources, recycling, sustainable development, wastes, water pollution, water quality, water resources, wetlands, wilderness, wildlife management |
| Conservation Education     |   | environmental education                | biological sciences, conservation (environment), energy conservation, energy education, fire science education, forestry, geography, natural resources, outdoor education, physical sciences, soil conservation, trials, wilderness, wetlands   |

| Term               | Definition  | See Also  | Related Terms  |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| Ecology            | study of the interrelationships between organisms and their environment | ecosystems  | adjustment to (to environment), air pollution, area studies, biology, botany, climate, conservation (environment), ecological factors, energy conservation, entropy, estuaries, ethology, evolution, habitats, human geography, marine biology, mycology, noise (sound), ocean engineering, pests, photosynthesis, quality of life, radiation biology, recycling, social biology, soil conservation, sustainable development, waste disposal, wastes, water, water quality, weather, wetlands, wilderness, wind (meteorology), zoology |
| Ecological Factors |   | influences  | conservation (environment), crowding, ecology, energy conservation, poisons, pollution, radiation effects  |
| Earth Science      |   | geochemistry, geology, geophysics, hydrology, meteorology, oceanography, physical geology, seismology, soil science, physical science | astronomy, cartography, chemistry, climate, crystallography, physical environment, physics, planetariums, plate tectonics, satellites (aerospace), space sciences, topography, water, wind (meteorology)   |

| Term               | Definition  | See Also  | Related Terms   |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Energy Education   | learning/teaching activities, often interdisciplinary in nature, that focus on such topics as energy, resources, conversions, conservation forms, uses and issues – including both general and technical educational programs |   | alternative energy sources, conservation education, consumer education, energy, energy conservation, energy occupations, fuels, science education, technology education, utilities  |
| Endangered Species |   | wildlife  | animals, conservation (environment), natural resources, physical environment, plant pathology, plants (botany), wildlife management   |
| Forestry           |   | technology  | agriculture, botany, conservation (environment), conservation education, forestry aids, forestry occupations, land use, lumber industry, natural resources, nurseries (horticulture), soil conservation, soil science, trees, wildlife management |
| Global Approach    | approaches to social, cultural, scientific and humanistic questions involving an orientation to the world as a single interacting system  | International approach, world mindedness, worldwide approach, global education, holistic approach | cultural awareness, group unity, intercultural programs, interdisciplinary approach, international cooperation, international relations, social sciences, world affairs, world problems   |

| Term              | Definition   | See Also  | Related Terms  |
|-------------------|--|---|--|
| Global Education  | learning/teaching activities across all grade levels that focus on the interrelatedness of peoples, cultures and nations – subfields include world geography, world history, and international relations   | global studies education, world studies education, international education, global approach | area studies, citizenship education, cross cultural studies, economics education, ethnic studies, multi cultural education, world geography, world history |
| Global Warming    | gradual increases in the earth’s temperature (if appropriate, use the more specific term “greenhouse effect)   | greenhouse effect, climate change   | heat, temperature, world problems  |
| Geothermal Energy | power derived from the earth’s heat  |   | alternative energy sources, electricity, geology, geophysics, groundwater, heat, power, technology, water resources  |
| Greenhouse Effect | global warming caused by atmospheric gasses and particles that trap heat and radiate it back to the earth – of concern is possible run away warming due to buildups of carbon dioxide and other gasses through fossil fuel burning and deforestation | global warming  | air pollution, solar energy  |
| Habitats          | places where animals or plants normally live   |   | animals, ecology, estuaries, natural resources, physical environment, plants (botany), wetlands, wildlife, wildlife management                             |

| <b>Term</b>         | <b>Definition</b>  | <b>See Also</b>                               | <b>Related Terms</b>  |
|---------------------|--|---|---|
| Hazardous Materials | ignitable, corrosive, infectious, reactive, or toxic materials that pose a threat to living things | dangerous materials, hazardous waste, poisons | asbestos, environmental influences, environmental standards, laboratory safety, occupational safety and health, physical environment, physical health, radiation, safety, sanitation, school safety, wastes   |
| Land Use            |  | land settlement, soil conservation            | agriculture, agronomy, community planning, educational facilities planning, facility planning, forestry, land acquisition, landlords, mining, real estate, road construction, soil science, turf management, underground facilities, urban planning, use studies, wetlands, wilderness, zoning  |
| Marine Education    | interdisciplinary group of learning/teaching activities concerning the earth's waters and seas     | marine science education, maritime education  | estuaries, hydrology, marine biology, oceanography, science education, underwater diving, water, wetlands   |
| Meteorology         |  | earth science                                 | acid rain, climate, climate change, humidity, physics, solar energy, temperature, thermal environment, water, weather, wind (meteorology)   |
| Natural Resources   |  | coal, fossil fuels, oil, water resources      | agricultural education, agriculture, alternative energy sources, asbestos, community resources, conservation (environment), conservation education, depleted resources, endangered species, energy conservation, environmental education, forestry, habitats, minerals, mining parks, physical environment, recycling, soil conservation, sustainable development, wilderness, wildlife |

| <b>Term</b>       | <b>Definition</b>   | <b>See Also</b>   | <b>Related Terms</b>   |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Nature Centers    |   |   | aquariums, education service centers, educational facilities, natural sciences, science teaching centers   |
| Pollution         |   | air pollution,<br>water pollution                                 | bacteria, chimneys, climate, disease control, diseases, ecological factors, environmental influences, environmental standards, hazardous materials, health, lead poisoning, noise (sound), physical environment, physical health, poisonings, poisons, public health, radiations effects, recycling, solid wastes, urban environment, viruses, waste disposal, waste water, wastes |
| Population Growth | increase in the number of individuals in a given area due to either natural reproduction or resettlement                                  | demography, development   | baby boomers, birth rate, community size, population distribution, population trends, social influences, urbanization  |
| Solar Energy      | light and heat radiation of the sun – also the energy collected as heat or converted to electricity from this source                      | solar heating, solar radiation, solar radiation energy, radiation | alternative energy sources, climate, climate control, electricity, green house effect, heat, light, meteorology, power technology, radiation effects, temperature, thermal environment, wind (meteorology)   |
| Solar System      | the sun and all the celestial bodies that revolve around it (including the planets and their moons, the asteroids, comets and meteoroids) |   | astronomy, planetariums, satellites (aerospace), space exploration, space sciences, stars  |

| <b>Term</b>             | <b>Definition</b>   | <b>See Also</b>  | <b>Related Terms</b>   |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Solid Wastes            | unwanted solid or semisolid materials discarded by farms, businesses, communities, or individuals (note: use "waste water" for sewage)  | garbage, litter, trash   | pollution, recycling, sludge, waste disposal, waste water, water treatment   |
| Space Exploration       | scientific investigations of areas beyond the earth's atmosphere (note: use "lunar research" for studies referring to the earth's moon) | extraterrestrial exploration, outer space research, planetary exploration        | aerospace technology, astronomy, planetariums, satellites (aerospace), solar system, space sciences, stars   |
| Space Sciences          |   | sciences   | aerospace education, aerospace technology, astronomy, earth science, lunar research, navigation, physical sciences, planetariums, satellites (aerospace), solar system, space exploration, stars |
| Stars                   | self luminous celestial bodies of hot gas held together by gravity – their energy is produced by nuclear fusion reactions               | astronomy, light, planetariums, solar systems, space exploration, space sciences |  |
| Sustainable Development | development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs       | sustainable agriculture, development   | community development, conservation (environment), developed nations, developing nations, ecology, environmental education, natural resources, physical environment                              |

| <b>Term</b>        | <b>Definition</b>   | <b>See Also</b>  | <b>Related Terms</b>   |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| Teaching Materials | print and/or non-print materials used in instruction  | instructional materials, curriculum materials, educational materials | audiovisual aids, course ware, programmed instructional materials, study guides, educational resources, educational technology, resource materials |
| Trails             | nature trails, pathways   | facilities   | adventure education, camping, conservation education, outdoor education, park design, parks, recreational facilities                               |
| Trees              |   | shade trees, plants  | agronomy, botany, forestry, ornamental horticulture, wildlife  |
| Turf Management    | lawn maintenance  | ornamental horticulture, pesticides, fertilizers                     | ground keepers, land use, landscaping  |
| Urban Environment  |   | environment, pollution, population growth, urbanization              | air pollution, water pollution, urban population, urban planning, urbanization   |
| Waste Disposal     | act or process of discarding or throwing away unneeded or excess material including solids, oils, gases, chemicals, and liquids | waste management, recycling, sanitation                              | air pollution, biotechnology, ecology, environmental standards, radiation, waste water, solid wastes, wastes                                       |

| <b>Term</b>     | <b>Definition</b>  | <b>See Also</b>                                     | <b>Related Terms</b>  |
|-----------------|--|---|---|
| Waste Water     | used water carrying suspended or dissolved solids from farms, industries, businesses or homes          | sewage, waste water, treatment, wastes, water       | pollution, recycling, sludge, solid wastes, waste disposal, water pollution, water treatment  |
| Wastes          | unnneeded, discarded, or excess material including solids, gases, chemicals and liquids                | hazardous waste, refuse, solid waste, waste water   | conservation (environment), ecology, hazardous materials, poison, pollution, recycling, resources, sludge, waste disposal   |
| Water Pollution |  | water pollution control, acid rain, river pollution | conservation (environment), ecology, environmental education, environmental standards, groundwater, hydrology, urban environment, waste disposal, water quality, water resources, water treatment |
| Water Quality   | biological, chemical and physical characteristics of water that influence its healthy and fruitful use | clean water   | acid rain, conservation (environment), drinking water, ecology, environmental standards, ground water, health, water, water pollution   |
| Weather         | state of atmospheric conditions at any one place and time  | climate, meteorology                                | climate change, climate control, ecology, environmental influences, natural disasters, thermal environment, water, wind   |
| Wetlands        | low area with shallow water or water-soaked soils  | estuaries, fisheries, marine biology, oceanography  | conservation (environment), conservation education, ecology, environmental education, habitats, land use, marine education, soil conservation, water, water resources, wildlife management        |

| Term       | Definition   | See Also  | Related Terms  |
|------------|--|---|--|
| Wilderness | an environmental condition that is characterized by a naturally developed life community undisturbed by human activity | outdoor activities, outdoor education, physical environment | adventure education, camping, conservation (environment), conservation education, ecology, environmental education, land settlement, land use, natural resources, wildlife |
| Wildlife   | animals and/or plants living in a natural (undomesticated or uncultivated) state                                       | endangered species, animals, biological sciences, botany    | birds, habitat, natural resources, plant growth, trees, weeds, wilderness, wildlife management   |
| Zoos       |  | animal facilities   | aquariums, educational facilities, parks, recreational facilities, wildlife management   |