

# Unit 02: Ecology

Content Area: **Science**  
Course(s): **Environmental Science**  
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**  
Length: **3 weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Standards

---

### LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms (pp. 147-148, NRC, 2012)

- The process of photosynthesis converts light energy to stored chemical energy by converting carbon dioxide plus water into sugars plus released oxygen. (HS-LS1-5)
- As matter and energy flow through different organizational levels of living systems, chemical elements are recombined in different ways to form different products. (HS-LS1-6),(HS-LS1-7)
- As a result of these chemical reactions, energy is transferred from one system of interacting molecules to another. Cellular respiration is a chemical process in which the bonds of food molecules and oxygen molecules are broken and new compounds are formed that can transport energy to muscles. Cellular respiration also releases the energy needed to maintain body temperature despite ongoing energy transfer to the surrounding environment. (HS-LS1-7)

### LS2.B: Cycles of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems (pp. 152-154, NRC, 2012)

- Photosynthesis and cellular respiration (including anaerobic processes) provide most of the energy for life processes. (HS-LS2-3)
- Plants or algae form the lowest level of the food web. At each link upward in a food web, only a small fraction of the matter consumed at the lower level is transferred upward, to produce growth and release energy in cellular respiration at the higher level. Given this inefficiency, there are generally fewer organisms at higher levels of a food web. Some matter reacts to release energy for life functions, some matter is stored in newly made structures, and much is discarded. The chemical elements that make up the molecules of organisms pass through food webs and into and out of the atmosphere and soil, and they are combined and recombined in different ways. At each link in an ecosystem, matter and energy are conserved. (HS-LS2-4)
- Photosynthesis and cellular respiration are important components of the carbon cycle, in which carbon is exchanged among the biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and geosphere through chemical, physical, geological, and biological processes. (HS-LS2-5)

### PS3.D: Energy in Chemical Processes (pp. 128-130, NRC, 2012)

- The main way that solar energy is captured and stored on Earth is through the complex chemical process known as photosynthesis. (secondary to HS-LS2-5)

SCI.9-12.HS-ESS2-6	Develop a quantitative model to describe the cycling of carbon among the hydrosphere, atmosphere, geosphere, and biosphere.
SCI.9-12.HS-ESS2-7.	Construct an argument based on evidence about the simultaneous coevolution of Earth's systems and life on Earth.
SCI.9-12.HS-ESS3-4	Evaluate or refine a technological solution that reduces impacts of human activities on natural systems.
SCI.9-12.HS-LS2-4	Use mathematical representations to support claims for the cycling of matter and flow of energy among organisms in an ecosystem.

SCI.9-12.HS-LS2-3	Construct and revise an explanation based on evidence for the cycling of matter and flow of energy in aerobic and anaerobic conditions.
SCI.9-12.HS-LS2-5	Develop a model to illustrate the role of photosynthesis and cellular respiration in the cycling of carbon among the biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere.
SCI.9-12.HS-LS2-7	Design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity.

## Essential Questions

---

What are the goals of environmental science?

How do Environmental Economics affect personal, public and political decisions?

What is the relationship between ethics and law?

## Content / Skills

---

Students construct explanations for the role of energy in the cycling of matter in organisms and ecosystems. They apply mathematical concepts to develop evidence to support explanations of the interactions of photosynthesis and cellular respiration and develop models to communicate these explanations. They relate the nature of science to how explanations may change in light of new evidence and the implications for our understanding of the tentative nature of science. Students understand organisms' interactions with each other and their physical environment, how organisms obtain resources, change the environment, and how these changes affect both organisms and ecosystems. In addition, students utilize the crosscutting concepts of matter and energy and Systems and system models to make sense of ecosystem dynamics. (p. 2, [Life Science Topics Storyline](#)).