 **Speak like a geographer**

**The Living World – Ecosystems and Rainforests**

The keywords and definitions below, that cover ecosystems and rainforests, are provided by AQA. There are more than those listed on your Get into Geography sheet. Start with those listed then build up to the others.

**Ecosystems**

# Abiotic

Relating to non-living things.

# Biotic

Relating to living things.

# Consumer

Creature that eats animals and/or plant matter.

# Decomposer

An organism such as a bacterium or fungus, that breaks down dead tissue, which is then recycled to the environment.

# Ecosystem

A community of plants and animals that interact with each other and their physical environment.

# Food chain

The connections between different organisms (plants and animals) that rely on one another as their source of food.

# Food web

A complex hierarchy of plants and animals relying on each other for food.

# Nutrient cycling

A set of processes whereby organisms extract minerals necessary for growth from soil or water, before passing them on through the food chain - and ultimately back to the soil and water.

# Global ecosystem

Very large ecological areas on the earth’s surface (or biomes), with fauna and flora (animals and plants) adapting to their environment. Examples include tropical rainforest and hot desert.

# Producer

An organism or plant that is able to absorb energy from the sun through photosynthesis.

**Tropical rainforests**

# Biodiversity

The variety of life in the world or a particular habitat.

# Commercial farming

Farming to sell produce for a profit to retailers or food processing companies.

# Debt reduction

Countries are relieved of some of their debt in return for protecting their rainforests.

# Deforestation

The chopping down and removal of trees to clear an area of forest.

# Ecotourism

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the wellbeing of the local people, and may involve education. It is usually carried out in small groups and has minimal impact on the local ecosystem.

# Logging

The business of cutting down trees and transporting the logs to sawmills.

# Mineral extraction

The removal of solid mineral resources from the earth. These resources include ores, which contain commercially valuable amounts of metals, such as iron and aluminium; precious stones, such as diamonds; building stones, such as granite; and solid fuels, such as coal and oil shale.

# Selective logging

The cutting out of trees which are mature or inferior, to encourage the growth of the remaining trees in a forest or wood.

# Soil erosion

Removal of topsoil faster than it can be replaced, due to natural (water and wind action), animal, and human activity. Topsoil is the top layer of soil and is the most fertile because it contains the most organic, nutrient-rich materials.

# Subsistence farming

A type of agriculture producing food and materials for the benefit only of the farmer and his family.

# Sustainability

Actions and forms of progress that meet the needs of the present without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.