

Unit I

Name: _____

Worksheet #3: The Geography of Life: Natural Systems

A. Read the paragraph on p. 54 of your text and fill in the blanks with the missing word.

Without nature's systems, there would be no life on earth! For example, the Earth's atmosphere acts as an essential support for life by providing us, and millions of other species, with _____ to breathe carbon dioxide for the _____ of plants, and nitrogen for _____ bacteria. In addition to all this, the atmosphere protects all species from _____ and other cosmic rays that can affect the Earth from space.

The Atmosphere doesn't stop there; it also helps to regulate the _____ on Earth so that water is available to living things in liquid form. Therefore, it acts as a key element of the _____ or water cycle, which carries water from the oceans to the land. The water that flows on land or is stored underground is needed for farming, industry, recreation, and our daily household use.

In addition to these services, nature provides us with a number of gifts. We don't think about these gifts very much because we tend to take them for granted. What are these gifts worth to you?

B. Nature's Gifts and Services

Try to brainstorm a list of gifts that nature provides for us each day. I have an example done for you!

1. Soil, where we can grow food.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

C. Considering Perspective

1. Take a moment to consider people who live in desert areas of the world. How would their life be different than our life here in Canada?

D. Characteristics of Natural Systems

There are a number of characteristics that all natural systems have in common. They include the following:

- They are driven by energy from the sun
- Support all living things, including humans
- Are connected to one another in a complex network of relationships
- Decompose and recycle all wastes
- Can be affected by natural events and human influences
- Are not well understood by humans
- Operate on very long timelines, from hundreds to millions of years
- Operate in all four of the earth’s spheres
- Display synergy

Activity:

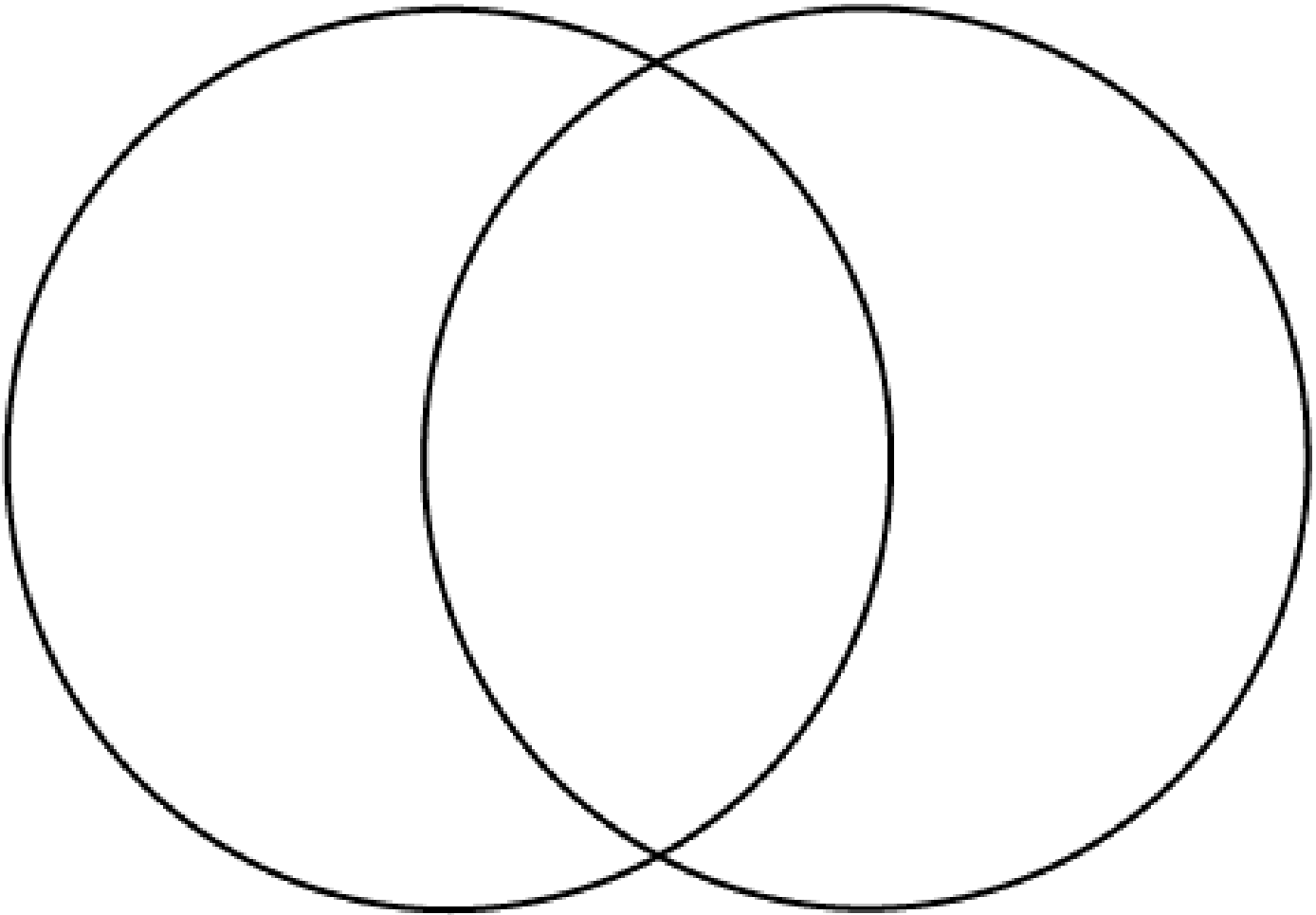
Take a few minutes to reflect all the different ways that you have interacted with a natural system over the past **24 hours** and write you reflection below.

E. Natural Systems Work In Cycles

1. We can’t effectively learn about geography without understanding some of the cycles that exist which regulate the Earth’s systems. Two such systems are the water cycle and the decay cycle. In the space below, outline the main details of each. (pg. 55 – 56)

Water Cycle	Decay Cycle

2. In what ways are the water cycles and decay cycles the same and different? Complete the Venn diagram below to show the relationship.



3. Some of you may have an aquarium in your house, if not; you would certainly be familiar with one. In what ways would an aquarium be different from a natural system?
