

# CHAPTER 1

Let's face it, the world is a big place! There is a lot of stuff here! We have all kinds of living creatures around, inside, below and above us at all times. Each of these living things is known as an **organism**. An organism is any living creature on the planet. Organisms can also be called **biotic** objects.

Now remember that living organisms include all creatures: dogs, cats, trees, bees, mushrooms, pond slime (yes, pond slime!) and even that weird green stuff that



grows on your food after you leave it out for a few days! That "green stuff" is called mold and it is very much alive! So what does it mean for an organism to be "alive"?

## To be alive, you must:

- use food
- grow
- react to changes in your **environment** (environment is a big word that means "everything in the world" )
- **reproduce** (to reproduce, an organism must be able to make another organism of its own kind)
- breathe

# Is everything a living organism?

No, not everything you see in nature is a living organism. Some things you see in nature are nonliving. These nonliving things are called **abiotic** objects.

Some nonliving items are:

Air	Sunlight
Water	Wind
Nails	Crayons
Plastic	And much, much more!

## Now back to living organisms...

You know what a living organism is. Let's look at what they need to stay alive. Since there are so many different creatures out there, where do we begin?

Let's start by looking at how alike we all are. (and I'm not just talking about how you and your best friend like the same kind of pizza!) Most living organisms need the same things to survive. An animal needs air, water, food and shelter to stay alive. A plant needs air, water, **nutrients** (a big word, which means "food") and light.

If you compare plants and animals, you will see they both need air, water and some form of nutrients (or food) to survive! It sounds simple doesn't it? But have you ever seen a plant pick up a cheeseburger for dinner or how about a baby growing out of a flower pot? Of course not!

## But what makes organisms different?



Both plants and animals need air, water and food to stay alive. That is one thing that makes us alike. What is different is **HOW** we get the air, water and food into our bodies.

Please don't go looking for a nose on the tree in your front yard! It doesn't have one, does it? A tree takes in air differently than we do.

**But...** What would happen if you take away food, air or water from an animal? It will soon die, right? This can happen with plants as well. Have you ever forgotten to water a plant in your house for a few days? How long did it take for that green, leafy plant to turn into a brown stick? Probably not very long!

Plants and animals need these basic **resources** to stay alive. Resources are the basic things that a group of similar organisms can use every day.

A group of similar organisms living in the same area is called a **population**.



Match the words in the first column to the best available answer in the second column.

- |                 |                                                         |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| ___ Biotic      | 1) nonliving things in the environment                  |
| ___ Population  | 2) another word for organism                            |
| ___ Resources   | 3) everything in the world                              |
| ___ Reproduce   | 4) another word for food                                |
| ___ Organism    | 5) any living creature on the planet                    |
| ___ Environment | 6) a group of similar organisms living in the same area |
| ___ Nutrients   | 7) able to make another of its own kind                 |
| ___ Abiotic     | 8) the basic things that an organism can use everyday   |

**Which one is right? Circle the correct answer.**

**1. What is another name for an organism?**

- a) abiotic
- b) biotic
- c) population

**2. Which of these do you not need to be alive?**

- a) grow
- b) breathe
- c) sleep

**3. Which of the following is an abiotic object?**

- a) a bird
- b) water
- c) pond slime

**4. What do plants and animals need to survive?**

- a) air and water
- b) water and food
- c) air, water and food

**5. Which of the following is an example of a population?**

- a) a dog
- b) a parent
- c) a herd of cows

**6. Plants and animals are different because they?**

- a) need air, water and food to survive
- b) get air, water and food into their bodies in different ways
- c) use different abiotic resources

Write down three biotic and three abiotic objects from the picture.



**Biotic**

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**Abiotic**

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