



Test Ninjas

VOCABULARY STUDY SERIES

ACT VOCABULARY

ACT Science Vocabulary: Earth, Space & Environment

20 focused words in Earth, Space & Environment

20

UNIQUE WORDS

1

CATEGORIES

ACT

EXAM FOCUS



About this study guide

This vocabulary guide was prepared and published by Test Ninjas as an independent study resource. It is designed to help students build the precise word knowledge needed for demanding academic reading and reasoning.

How to use this guide

Study in short, repeated sessions. Read each definition, say the word aloud, and use the example to understand how the word functions in context. Return to unfamiliar words until you can explain them without looking at the definition.

Copyright and permitted use

© 2026 Test Ninjas. All rights reserved. A lawful purchaser may print this document for personal study or for students in one class directly taught by that purchaser. Redistribution, resale, public posting, dataset extraction, and use for training or evaluating automated systems are prohibited without written permission.

Independent publication. SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT, and LSAT are trademarks of their respective owners. Their owners are not affiliated with, and do not endorse, Test Ninjas.

001 aquifer *noun***EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT**

A body of permeable rock that can contain or transmit groundwater

The massive **aquifer** beneath the Great Plains supplies drinking water to millions but is being depleted faster than it recharges.

MEMORY CUE: An aquifer is an underground rocky sponge storing and transmitting water.

002 cratered *adjective***EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT**

Having craters (bowl-shaped depressions) on the surface

The **cratered** surface of the moon preserves a record of billions of years of asteroid impacts.

MEMORY CUE: A cratered moon wears bowl-shaped dents across its surface.

003 glaciers *noun (plural)***EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT**

Massive, slow-moving bodies of ice formed from compacted snow on land

As **glaciers** retreat due to rising temperatures, they expose landscapes that have been buried under ice for millennia.

MEMORY CUE: Glaciers are immense rivers of compacted ice moving slowly across land.

004 meteorology *noun***EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT**

The scientific study of the atmosphere and weather

Advances in **meteorology** have dramatically improved the accuracy of weather forecasts over the past fifty years.

MEMORY CUE: Meteorology studies the atmosphere's weather, winds, clouds, and storms.

005 radiocarbon *noun/adjective***EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT**

Relating to carbon-14 dating, a method of determining the age of organic materials

Radiocarbon dating placed the artifacts at approximately 3,000 years old, consistent with the Bronze Age settlement.

MEMORY CUE: Radiocarbon dating reads carbon-14's clock to estimate organic material's age.

006 sedimentary *adjective***EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT**

Relating to or formed from sediment (material deposited by water, wind, or glaciers)

Fossils are most commonly found in **sedimentary** rock, where layers of sand and mud preserved organisms over millennia.

MEMORY CUE: Sedimentary rock forms as deposited layers of sediment press together.

007 temperate *adjective*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

Relating to moderate climatic regions between the tropics and the poles

The **temperate** forests of the Pacific Northwest support some of the tallest trees and most diverse fungal communities on Earth.

MEMORY CUE: Temperate climates occupy the moderate zones between tropics and poles.

008 unearthed *verb (past participle)*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

Dug up from the ground; discovered through excavation

Construction workers accidentally **unearthed** a cache of Roman coins buried beneath the foundation of a medieval church.

MEMORY CUE: Archaeologists unearthed the artifact by digging it out of the ground.

009 unvegetated *adjective*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

Having no vegetation; bare of plant life

The **unvegetated** slopes above the treeline are subject to severe erosion during heavy rainstorms.

MEMORY CUE: Unvegetated ground is bare soil with no plant cover.

010 acreage *noun*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

An area of land, typically measured in acres

The disputed **acreage** along the border became the flashpoint for a decades-long territorial conflict.

MEMORY CUE: Acreage measures how many acre-sized squares cover a piece of land.

011 arid *adjective*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

extremely dry (often describing climate or land); lacking in interest or excitement.

Only drought-resistant shrubs survived in the **arid** valley, where rain had not fallen for months.

MEMORY CUE: An arid landscape is cracked and extremely dry; an arid lecture feels equally lifeless.

012 desiccate *verb*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

to dry out thoroughly; to remove moisture from.

Weeks of intense heat **desiccated** the unprotected soil until deep cracks appeared, providing concrete clues from which a careful reader can infer the unfamiliar term.

MEMORY CUE: Desiccate a leaf until all moisture leaves and it becomes dry and brittle.

013 inundate *verb*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

To overwhelm someone with things to be dealt with; to flood

After the announcement, the office was **inundated** with phone calls from concerned citizens.

MEMORY CUE: To inundate an inbox, flood it with more messages than manageable.

014 parched *adjective*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

extremely dry; thirsty.

After crossing the exposed ridge, the **parched** hikers eagerly refilled their empty water bottles.

MEMORY CUE: A parched throat and cracked ground both desperately need water.

015 fallow *adjective*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

(Of farmland) plowed and harrowed but left unsown for a period to restore its fertility

The farmer left the eastern fields **fallow** for a season, allowing the depleted soil to recover its nutrients.

MEMORY CUE: A fallow field rests unsown so its fertility can recover.

016 tectonic *adjective*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

Relating to the structure and movement of large sections of Earth's crust.

Tectonic motion along the plate boundary produced frequent earthquakes and slowly raised the mountain range.

MEMORY CUE: Tectonic plates are giant moving tiles fitted across Earth's outer shell.

017 erosion *noun*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

The removal and transport of rock or soil by water, wind, ice, or gravity.

Riverbank **erosion** accelerated when flooding carried loosened soil downstream after vegetation had been removed.

MEMORY CUE: Erosion is Earth's slow conveyor belt carrying worn material away from its source.

018 atmosphere *noun*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

The layer or collection of gases surrounding a planet or other celestial body.

Earth's **atmosphere** absorbs some harmful radiation while retaining heat needed for liquid water at the surface.

MEMORY CUE: The atmosphere is a planet's enormous gas blanket wrapped around its surface.

019 **climate** *noun*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

The long-term pattern of weather conditions typical of a region or the planet.

The region's **climate** became drier across decades even though individual years still included severe storms.

MEMORY CUE: Weather is today's outfit; climate is the whole long-term wardrobe.

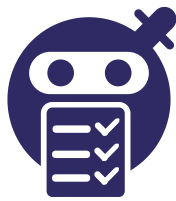
020 **orbit** *noun*

EARTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

The curved path an object follows around another body because of gravity.

The satellite remained in **orbit** because gravity continually bent its forward motion toward Earth.

MEMORY CUE: An orbit is a gravity-curved racetrack looping around a larger body.



ACT VOCABULARY

Keep building your edge.

Vocabulary grows through repeated exposure and deliberate use.
Revisit this list, write with the words, and practice recognizing their
meaning in context.

More focused practice at test-ninjas.com