

Grasslands



What Are They?

Grasslands are **ecosystems**.

Grass, shrubs, and small trees grow there. **Temperate** grasslands have warm summers and cool winters.

Tropical grasslands have even **temperatures** all year.

Where Are They?

About one-fourth of Earth's land is grassland.

Prairies in North America are **temperate** grasslands.

The **tropical** grasslands are the **savannas** of South America, Africa, Asia, and Australia.

Grassland Layers

Grassland soil has at least three **layers**. The top **layer** is called **humus**. **Topsoil** is the second **layer** where plants take **root**. Third is the **subsoil** that stores water. Grasslands may have a fourth rock **layer**.

Grassland Plants

Grasslands are home to many grasses. Corn and wheat are grasses. Most of the world's food is grown on farmed grasslands.

Rye, oats, and barley grow well in rich grassland soil.

Grassland Animals

Grassland animals are at home close to the ground. They don't need to nest in or hide in tall trees. Elephants, lions, and zebras live on savannas. Prairie dogs live on North American prairies.

Glossary Terms

temperature - the degree of heat or cold in something, usually measured by a thermometer

topsoil - the top or surface layer of soil; topsoil is good for planting because it contains decaying leaves, grass, and other organic matter.

humus - a layer of soil made from rotting vegetable and animal matter

layer - a thickness or coating of something

ecosystem - a group of animals and plants that work together with their surroundings

prairie - a large area of flat grassland with few or no trees

prairie dog - a small burrowing mammal related to the squirrel

root - the part of the plant that is underground

savanna - a flat, grassy tropical plain with few or no trees

subsoil - the layer of soil under topsoil that stores water

temperate - an area with temperatures that are neither very hot nor very cold

tropical - having to do with the hot and wet areas near the equator

“Grasslands.” *Science*. Capstone, www.pebblego.com. Accessed 1 May. 2020.