

A to C

Aesthetics	The look and feel of something.
Allotment	A piece of land that can be rented to grow fruits and vegetables.
Biodiversity	The variety of different life forms within an ecosystem (e.g. plants, humans, animals).
Boycotting	Refusing to attend an event or buy a product for ethical (moral) reasons.
Brownfield	Land previously used for industry.
Building energy rating	A rating that indicates the energy performance of a building.
Car club	A club where you pay an annual subscription, to book and use a car as and when you need it.
Car share	When car owners take many passengers in their vehicle, rather than travelling by themselves.
Carbon emissions	Carbon dioxide (CO ₂) that enters the atmosphere, particularly as a result of human activity.
Carbon footprint	The total amount of greenhouse gases (e.g. carbon dioxide) created by someone or something (directly or indirectly).
Carbon negative	When a building produces more energy than it can use (e.g. through solar panels). This excess energy can be put back into the energy grid system to be used by others.
Carbon neutral	When the amount of CO ₂ released into the atmosphere is balanced in some way by the reduction of same amount of CO ₂ (e.g. by carbon offsetting).
Carbon offsetting	The reduction of an amount of CO ₂ from the atmosphere to compensate for the release of same amount of CO ₂ (e.g. you can offset the carbon emissions produced from flying by giving money to carbon-reducing projects such as renewable energy or energy conservation. Carbon offsetting should be seen as a last resort as reducing carbon emissions should be considered first).
Carboniferous period	A period of time, and geological system that is characterised by low sea levels and large areas of ice-covered land.
Cavity wall	A wall built with an enclosed inner space that can be filled with insulation, in order to conserve energy and heat.
Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)	Greenhouse gases released from aerosol sprays.

C to D

Climate Change	Changes in climate (weather patterns) over a period of time (thought by many to be caused by global warming, see global warming definition).
Coal	A black rock-like substance that is mined and burnt as a 'fossil fuel'.
Cohesion	Togetherness or unity (e.g. community cohesion).
Commodity	Something of use, advantage or value.
Community	A group of people sharing a common environment, culture or interest (e.g. locally or globally).
Commuting	Regularly travelling from one place to another (e.g. to work or school).
Congestion	Excess traffic or people in a particular area or network.
Conscious shopping	(Also called 'ethical consumerism'.) The practice of being aware of the products you are buying and making sure they have been created and distributed ethically.
Conservation	Protecting or preserving something (e.g. nature).
Contaminate	Pollute or make unclean.
Co-operative	Joint operation or action.
Countryside Code	A set of rules, within the UK, to encourage people to respect and protect rural areas.
Decompose	Rot or break down.
Deforestation	The clearance of forests, by logging and/or burning of trees.
Demographics	The characteristics of a population (e.g. race, age, socio-economic background).
Discrimination	Treating a particular group less well, or not respecting them (due to race, gender, religion, etc).
Diversity	Variety and difference.
Double glazing	A window with two panes of glass and a space between them, used for conserving heat and energy.
Draught proofing	Blocking areas such as chimneys, windows, doors and letterboxes, which let cold air in and hot air out.

E to G

Eco-building	A building that has been designed to make use of energy-saving technology. True eco-buildings will be made from locally sourced sustainable materials and will be run almost exclusively on renewable energy.
Eco-friendly	Helping, or at least not harming, the environment.
Ecosystem	A natural unit of independent organisms that share the same habitat (e.g. plants, humans and animals).
Eco-tourism	Responsible tourism that respects people, their cultures and the environment, and causes no harm to these.
Electric car	A car that is powered by electricity.
Endangered	A species that has a very low population and is in danger of extinction (e.g. plant or animal).
Equal opportunities	The principle of making sure all people have the same opportunity to live, work and reach their potential, regardless of gender, race, religion, etc.
Equality	Being equal.
Erosion	The wearing away of something as a result of friction (e.g. the flow of water in a river can erode the banks).
Ethical	To do with the moral choice between right and wrong (behaviour that is 'ethical' is seen as 'correct' by society).
Ethical consumerism	See 'conscious shopping'.
Fairtrade Foundation (The)	An organisation that certifies products that meet international Fairtrade standards (meaning they have been produced ethically).
Farmers' market	A place for farmers to sell their produce, usually from local farms.
Food miles	The distance food travels from where it is produced to where it is consumed.
Fossil fuel	A fuel formed during the Carboniferous Period, that is burnt for energy (e.g. coal, oil, gas).
Freecycle	The concept of swapping your goods with other people's in order to make use of unwanted items.
Fuel	Something that is usually burnt to make energy.
Garden cities	Communities that have been carefully designed to balance the number of homes, industrial/commercial buildings and green spaces.

G to M

Geothermal	Heat and steam energy stored beneath the Earth's surface.
Global warming	An increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere, caused by higher levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
Greenfield	Land previously used for agriculture.
Greenhouse Effect	The heating of the Earth's atmosphere through greenhouse gases trapping heat from the Sun.
Greenhouse gases	Gases (e.g. carbon dioxide, methane) that are trapped inside the Earth's atmosphere, and cause the planet to heat up by trapping the Sun's radiation and preventing it from 'escaping' back into space.
Habitat	An environment that is inhabited by a particular animal or plant species.
Hybrid car	An eco-friendly vehicle that uses two or more power sources (e.g. petrol and electricity).
Hydro-electric energy	Electrical energy generated from the movement of water.
Hydrogen	An element that can be used to produce energy when its atoms are split and combined with oxygen to form water.
Hydrological cycle	Technical term for the water cycle.
Insulation	A material that reduces or prevents the transmission of heat, sound or electricity (e.g. between the walls of a home or an office).
Interspersed	Placed among other things.
Kyoto Protocol	A worldwide treaty (agreement) created in 1997 and produced by the United Nations that sets out targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and greenhouse gases. So called because of the city in Japan where the agreement was made.
Lagging	A form of insulation applied to pipes and hot water tanks to stop heat escaping.
Lift sharing	A listing of car journeys onto a particular website, so passengers can find someone going along the route they wish to travel.
Lobbying	A way to influence government decisions on a particular issue (e.g. protest, petition).
Local sourcing	Sourcing goods, services and materials made in your local area.
Methane	A colourless, odourless gas with the chemical symbol CH ₄ . One of the greenhouse gases contributing to global warming.

N to R

Natural gas	A fossil fuel found naturally underground or under the sea. It is used as a source of energy (e.g. for gas cookers).
Neighbourliness	Being helpful and friendly to neighbours.
Non-renewable resource	A resource that is not able to be replaced (e.g. oil and coal).
Nuclear power	Power created by a nuclear reaction.
Oil	A fossil fuel that is buried deep in the Earth and is burnt to produce energy (e.g. used in cars).
Oil refineries	An industrial plant that processes and turns crude oil into useful products (e.g. petrol).
Organic	Food that is free of pesticides and other chemicals.
Organism	A living thing (e.g. humans, plants, animals).
Pesticide	A substance or mixture of substances used to kill a pest.
Photovoltaic panels	Solar panels that convert sunlight into electricity.
Planning permission	The permission needed by a home or building owner to alter, extend or change the use of their property or land.
Pollution	Something that damages or contaminates the environment; can be in the form of land, air or water pollution.
Population	All of the people or organisms in a particular area.
Prejudice	A preformed, negative opinion about a person, group or action.
Recyclables	Materials that are able to be recycled.
Recycle	Altering something so that it can be used again for the same or a different purpose.
Regeneration	The process of land redevelopment in order to improve an area or bring it 'back to life'.
Renovation	The process of improving or extending an existing building.
Residential	Relating to housing.
Residents' association	An organisation made up of residents in a particular area, who work together to affect change and improve the community.
Restoration	The process of restoring an item (object or land) to its former state.

S to Z

Solar energy	Energy generated from the Sun's radiation.
Supply chain	The process, companies and people involved in turning a raw material into a saleable product.
Sustainable	When something can be constantly maintained, for needs to be met now and in the future (e.g. Sustainable communities – see below).
Sustainable communities	Eco-friendly places where people want to live and work and that meet all the needs of residents, now and in the future.
Sustainable development	Building and developing something in a sustainable way.
Sustainable Schools	A Government initiative to encourage schools to become more sustainable by 2020.
Urban decay	When buildings or communities are left to fall into disrepair.
Urban planning	The process of designing and planning a community to meet the needs (both now and in the future) of those that will live and work there.
Water butt	A container that collects rainwater from gutters.
Water energy	Energy produced by the movement of water (e.g. waves or in a dam).
Wind energy	Energy created from the movement of air (wind).