**Natural resources** are things that come from nature (the natural environment) and are the living and nonliving components that support life on Earth. They can be classified into seven categories: plants, animals, soil, minerals, energy sources (e.g., sunlight, fossil fuels), air, and water. All products that we use everyday come from Earth’s natural resources, which provide the raw material for the products that people make. For example, iron ore is the raw material in the natural resources category mineral, and people use iron ore to make steel. Steel is used to make cars, appliances, and many other products. Trees are natural resources classified as plants, and people use trees for lumber to build houses and other structures; they also use a tree’s pulp to make paper. Since natural resources are required by all living things, humans are also totally dependent on natural resources, such as air, water, plants, and animals, for their survival.

**PLANTS**—Plants are living things that can produce their own food. Trees, shrubs, grasses, seaweed, and some microscopic algae are examples of plants. Green plants produce oxygen. They also produce food for animals and people that eat plants.

**ANIMALS**—Most animals can be defined as living things that rely on other organisms for food. Animals have a nervous system and can usually move on their own. Examples of types of animals are: mammals (includes humans), birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates, such as insects, spiders, and worms. Some microscopic living things are also classified as animals. Animals are also a source of food for people.

**SOIL**—Soil is a mixture of minerals from weathered rock and decaying plant and animal matter. It also consists of microscopic living things, such as bacteria and fungi. Most plants that live on land need soil in which to grow, and soil provides water and nutrients to plants. Many animals live on or in soil.

**MINERALS**—Minerals are naturally occurring substances that originally came from rock, such as phosphorous, bauxite, iron, salt, gold, silver, copper, and potassium. Many minerals are essential for the healthy growth of plants and animals, and plants absorb minerals that are dissolved in water. Humans use minerals for building materials, electronic devices, food, and jewelry.

**AIR**—Animals need oxygen in the air to breathe, and plants use carbon dioxide in the air in the process of photosynthesis. The gases are recycled through plants and animals.

**WATER**—Plants use water when manufacturing their food, and animals drink or absorb water to maintain bodily functions. Some animals live in water, and some use it as a place from which to get food, to seek protection, or to cool off. Water is essential for humans to survive and also is necessary for farming crops.

**ENERGY SOURCES**

• Sunlight—The energy derived from sunlight is used by green plants for photosynthesis. Sunlight also powers the water cycle by evaporating water from land and surface water. Solar power is also useful in making electricity for humans.

• Fossil Fuels—Fossil fuels include crude oil, coal, and natural gas. The fossil fuels we are using now originated from partially decayed plants and animals that lived millions of years ago. Fossil fuels are used by humans to power machinery and produce electricity.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Natural Resources Chart**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Natural Resource** | **Examples** | **How is it useful to people?** | **What do people make out of it?** |
| **PLANTS**  **Image result for plant clipart black and white** |  |  |  |
| **ANIMALS**  Image result for ANIMAL clipart black and white |  |  |  |
| **SOIL**  **Image result for SOIL clipart black and white** |  |  |  |
| **MINERALS**  Image result for MINERAL clipart black and white |  |  |  |
| **ENERGY SOURCES**  Image result for FOSSIL FUEL clipart black and white |  |  |  |