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| soil | a loose mixture of small mineral fragments, organic material, water, and air that can support plant life. |
| transported soil | soil that is blown or washed away from its parent rock. |
| residual soil | soil that remains above its parent rock. |
| parent rock | the rock formation that is the source of soil and the source of minerals in the soil. |
| bedrock | the layer of rock beneath the soil. |

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| soil texture | soil quality that is based on the proportions and sizes of soil particles. |
| soil pH | a chemical characteristic of soil that affects how nutrients dissolve in soil. |
| soil structure | the physical arrangement of soil particles. |
| soil fertility | the ability of soil to hold and supply nutrients to plants. |

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| desert | climate with less than 25 cm of rain per year and poor soil quality that cannot support plant life. |
| temperate forest/grassland | climate with good balance of weathering, leaching, and soil formation that results in rich top soil. |
| tropical rainforest | climate with heavy rain that leaches nutrients from the soil leaving the soil nutrient poor. |
| artctic areas | climate with low temperatures and slow soil formation, resulting in thin soil that cannot support plant growth. |