

The Carbon Cycle

9th Grade

Where carbon goes, and where humans changed the balance.

Carbon moves continuously between air, living things, oceans and rock.

1

PHOTOSYNTHESIS

Plants take CO_2 out of the air and lock it into glucose.

2

CONSUMPTION

Animals eat plants; the carbon moves into them.

3

RESPIRATION

All living things release CO_2 back into the air.

4

DECOMPOSITION

Decomposers return carbon from the dead to soil and air.

5

FOSSILISATION AND BURNING

Buried carbon becomes fossil fuel; burning it releases it again, fast.

Fossil fuels took millions of years to store carbon. Burning them returns it in a couple of centuries.