

This is the **Foundation Separate** version — Higher Tier content has been removed.

Matter cycles continuously through ecosystems — the same atoms are reused again and again.

- Carbon cycle: photosynthesis removes CO₂; respiration, decomposition and combustion return it
- Decomposers (bacteria and fungi) break down dead matter → release CO₂ and mineral ions
- Water cycle: evaporation → condensation → precipitation → runoff
- Only photosynthesis removes CO₂ from atmosphere — all other processes add CO₂

Key Terms

Decomposer

Organism breaking down dead matter — releases nutrients for reuse

■ **Exam Tip:** The key fact about carbon cycle: ONLY photosynthesis removes CO₂. All others add it. This comes up in every exam series.