

RESOURCES

Important Concepts

1. *Resources* are those things necessary or important to human life and civilization. *Renewable resources* are those that are capable of replenishment or regeneration on a human time scale. Resources that cannot be replenished or regenerated are called *nonrenewable resources*. Mineral and fossil fuel deposits are examples of nonrenewable resources.
2. Worldwide, rates of resource use are increasing faster than the population growth. Additionally, per capita consumption of resources is rising, mainly as a result of technological advances and improved standards of living.
3. Earth resources are useful or valuable geologic materials such as minerals, metals, or fuels.
4. *Reserves* represent that quantity of a resource that has been found and can be recovered economically with existing technology. *Cumulative reserves* represent the total reserves, including those already consumed.
5. *Subeconomic resources* (also called conditional resources) are those that have already been found but cannot be profitably exploited with existing technology.
6. *Undiscovered resources* are subdivided into hypothetical resources and speculative resources. *Hypothetical resources* are those resources that are expected to be found in areas in which similar deposits have already been found. *Speculative resources* are those resources that might be found in explored and unexplored regions where similar deposits are not already known to occur.
7. Predictions of how long specific resources will last depend on projections of future demand and the continued profitability of exploitation or extraction.
8. An increase in the consumption of earth resources is unavoidable because of an exponential population growth. Our goal should be to achieve *sustainable development*, development that would ensure a reasonable standard of living without excessive consumption of resources or serious environmental damage.