

IB Geography – Knowledge Check

What are Feedback Loops?

Negative and positive feedback systems keep a system in dynamic equilibrium. A negative feedback decreases the amount of change by reducing some of the inputs, returning the system to stability. Positive feedback is less common. It increases the amount of change. This leads to an imbalance.

Negative Feedback Example:

A good supply of grass for rabbits to eat will attract more rabbits to the area, which puts pressure on the grass, so it dies back, so the decreased food supply leads to a decrease in population because of death or out migration, which takes away the pressure on the grass, which leads to more growth and a good supply of food which leads to a more rabbits attracted to the area which puts pressure on the grass and so on and on....

Positive Feedback Example:

Polar ice reflects light from the sun. As this ice begins to melt, less sunlight gets reflected into space. It is instead absorbed into the oceans and land, raising the overall temperature, and fueling further melting. This results in a positive feedback loop called ice albedo feedback, which causes the loss of the sea ice to be self-compounding. The more it disappears, the more likely it is to continue to disappear.

Source: From www.geographyalltheway.com

