

# Decay and Destruction

## WORD LIST

annihilate	contaminate	corrode	curtail	deplete
deteriorate	extinct	negate	rancid	squander

Because our world is made of things that do not last forever, decay and destruction are part of life. The words in this lesson address this fact and will help you better understand and describe all sorts of situations that involve these processes.

**1. annihilate** (ə-nī'ə-lāt') *verb* from Latin *ad-*, "to" + *nihil*, "nothing"

To destroy completely

- In the science fiction movie, evil invaders plotted to **annihilate** life on Earth.

**annihilation** *noun* The volcanic eruption resulted in the **annihilation** of the village.

**2. contaminate** (kən-tām'ə-nāt') *verb*

To make impure or unclean

- Pesticides **contaminated** the lake, making it unsafe for swimming.

**contamination** *noun* The vat of potato salad had to be thrown away because of bacterial **contamination**.

**contaminant** *noun* The air, water, and soil near certain kinds of factories often have unhealthy levels of **contaminants**.

**3. corrode** (kə-rōd') *verb* from Latin *corrodere*, "to gnaw away"

a. To dissolve or gradually destroy a metal

- Acid **corrodes** many metals.

b. To cause to deteriorate gradually

- Some people think that violent video games **corrode** both the minds and the morals of America's youth.

**corrosion** *noun* The hulls of ships are often coated with special paint that slows **corrosion**.



corroded metal

Rust is a product of the **corrosion** of iron or certain other metals.

**4. curtail** (kər-tāl') *verb*

To cut short or reduce

- The storm **curtailed** the volleyball game.

**5. deplete** (dī-plēt') *verb* from Latin *deplere*, "to empty"

To use up or to empty out

- The costly party **depleted** the chess club's funds for the year.

**depletion** *noun* Overfishing has caused **depletion** of the ocean's fish stocks.