



Food Webs

LESSON PLAN

What Can Be Learned

All plants and animals rely on other parts of their environment in order to get energy and materials to survive. No living thing can exist in isolation. Within any ecosystem - which could be a foreshore, forest, river, or your backyard - there is an intricate web of relationships between living things.

This activity will help students understand:

- The feeding relationships between organisms; called the food web.
- How individual animals and plants rely on each other.
- How the disappearance of one part of the food web can affect, and upset the balance of, an ecosystem.

Materials Required

Native animal picture or name cards
Chalk or cardboard arrows
Large ball of string or wool

The Activity

Food Webs - Organise animal pictures into food chains and food webs. Explain a food chain in simple terms. Have the students draw the animal they have been studying, and place another animal above (the predator) and below (what it eats) to make a food chain.

Give each child a long cardboard arrow. When animal pictures are placed on the floor have the students think about the predator for each. Have them place their arrow pointing to the animal that eats it.

This activity could also be done in the playground with the students drawing a native animal and then a chalk line from the animal to what it eats.

How many animals are in the web? How many 'connections' (lines or arrows) are there? (There should be many more 'connections' than there are animals.)

The complexity of the relationships in a food web, and every animal's reliance on a variety of others can be further illustrated by the following activity:

You will need:

A ball of string

A full range of animal picture/name cards (including animals like insects and lizards) that can be clearly displayed on each student.

Give the ball of string to one student/animal. They wrap the end of the string around a finger - then pass the ball of string to another 'animal', first stating what animal they are themselves, and whether they eat or are eaten by the animal they are passing the string to. For example:

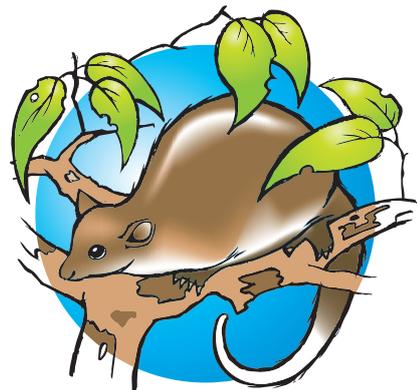
"I am a lizard and I am eaten by a bird"

"I am a bandicoot and I eat small bugs"

As each animal receives the string they wind it around a finger and toss the string to another animal. Repeat the process until the string has run out.

Demonstrate what happens by 'wiping out' one of the animals in the food web - touch the animal on the head, give the reason for the animal's demise (e.g. poison, home tree dies). This animal then falls to the ground. Any animal that feels the tug on the string or sees they are affected by the animal's disappearance from the food chain also falls down.

The process of untangling themselves will also force students to think about this interconnectivity.



Urban Wildlife E-Set suited for lower primary students.

Urban Wildlife E-Set - Lesson Plan

E-Sets are an Electronic Environmental and Educational set of notes for teachers