Food Web

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

SUMMARY
Food webs are diagrams that show what organisms in an ecosystem eat. This shows the flow of energy, starting with plants then to the plant-eaters and finally predators. In this activity you will create your own food web that reflects the food webs going on in your backyard.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- Animals and plants found in the ecosystem around the learner's house.
- Predator-prey relationships within an ecosystem.
- Learners will think critically about what plants and animals are in their neighborhood.

Materials Used	**Resources Used**
● Paper for drawing ● Markers or crayons ● Printed pictures of animals (optional)	● Internet for research or nature books ● A window to look out

WHAT TO DO

1. With your page and writing implements, sit where you can see out a window.
2. On the page, write down every living thing you see through your window. Try to keep plants at the bottom, herbivores (plant-eaters) in the middle, and carnivores (meat-eaters) towards the top. If you're comfortable with your artistic abilities, try drawing a picture next to the names.
3. Looking at the living things on your sheet, consider which organisms eat other organisms. Draw arrows from food organisms to what eats them. You might end up adding more living things to your page at this point. For example…
    a. Draw lines from grass to rabbits, beetles, and anything else that eats grass.
    b. Draw lines from squirrels to predators like hawks, cats, and owls.
4. The arrows show the flow of energy through the food web. Hawks get their energy from catching and eating squirrels, while squirrels get their energy from feeding and eating nuts from trees.
5. Think about this question: *where are the trees getting their energy?* The answer is from their leaves that absorb sunlight. That means that everything in the food web gets energy from sunlight.

TIPS

- For learners in early elementary grades (second grade or lower), consider doing a food chain instead. Rather than a branching diagram of predator-prey relationships, there is just one line of organisms eating other organisms.
- Food webs don't need to be neatly organized. Allowing learners to freely write down new animals as they think about them inspires more creativity and consideration. If an organism would eat other organisms on the page and it isn't near them, long looping arrows just add to the learner's unique food web design.