Name: _____ Date: _____

The Food Chain

Circle group

All living things need energy. A food chain shows how energy moves from one living thing to the next when one is eaten.

Most food chains start with a plant. A plant uses sunlight to make its own food. So it is called a producer. Grass is a producer.

An animal can't make its own food. It eats other living things, so it is called a consumer. A grasshopper eats grass. A frog eats the grasshopper. A snake eats the frog. A hawk eats the snake. Animals that eat only plants are called herbivores. Animals that eat other animals are called carnivores.

What happens when a plant or animal dies? Decomposers break it down. Mushrooms, worms, and tiny bacteria are decomposers. They put nutrients back in the soil for new plants to use.

Questions

1. What does a food chain show?

_____

_____

2. Why is grass called a producer?

_____

_____

3. What does the frog eat?

_____

_____

4. How is a herbivore not the same as a carnivore?

_____

_____

5. What do decomposers do?

_____

_____

6. What would happen to the frogs if all the grasshoppers were gone?

_____

_____

Words to know

producer: a living thing, such as a plant, that makes its own food
consumer: a living thing that eats other living things for food
herbivore: an animal that eats only plants
carnivore: an animal that eats other animals
decomposer: a living thing that breaks down dead plants and animals

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Food Chain

Triangle group

Every living thing needs energy. A food chain shows how energy moves from one living thing to another when they are eaten.

Most food chains begin with a plant. A plant uses sunlight to make its own food, so it is called a producer. Grass is a producer.

An animal cannot make its own food. It is a consumer, because it eats other living things. A grasshopper eats grass. A frog eats the grasshopper. A snake eats the frog, and a hawk eats the snake. Animals that eat only plants are called herbivores. Animals that eat other animals are called carnivores.

What happens when a plant or an animal dies? Decomposers, such as mushrooms, worms, and tiny bacteria, break it down. They return nutrients to the soil, and new plants use the nutrients to grow.

Questions

1. What does a food chain show?

_____

_____

2. Why is grass called a producer?

_____

_____

3. In the food chain in the passage, what does the frog eat?

_____

_____

4. What is the difference between a herbivore and a carnivore?

_____

_____

5. What do decomposers do?

_____

_____

6. What would probably happen to the frogs if all the grasshoppers disappeared?

_____

_____

Words to know

producer: a living thing, such as a plant, that makes its own food
consumer: a living thing that eats other living things for food
herbivore: an animal that eats only plants
carnivore: an animal that eats other animals
decomposer: a living thing that breaks down dead plants and animals

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Food Chain

Square group

Every living organism requires energy. A food chain illustrates how energy is transferred from one living thing to another when one is eaten.

Most food chains originate with a plant. Because a plant uses sunlight to manufacture its own food, it is classified as a producer. Grass is one example of a producer.

An animal, on the other hand, cannot manufacture its own food. It is considered a consumer, because it survives by eating other living things. Consider this sequence: a grasshopper eats grass, a frog eats the grasshopper, a snake eats the frog, and finally a hawk eats the snake. Animals that consume only plants are known as herbivores, while animals that consume other animals are known as carnivores.

What happens after a plant or an animal dies? Organisms called decomposers, including mushrooms, worms, and microscopic bacteria, gradually break it down. Decomposers return nutrients to the soil, and new plants absorb those nutrients in order to grow.

Questions

1. What does a food chain illustrate?

_____

_____

2. Why is grass classified as a producer?

_____

_____

3. In the sequence described in the passage, what does the frog eat?

_____

_____

4. Explain the difference between herbivores and carnivores.

_____

_____

5. What role do decomposers play?

_____

_____

6. Predict what would probably happen to the frogs if every grasshopper disappeared.

_____

_____

Words to know

producer: a living thing, such as a plant, that makes its own food
consumer: a living thing that eats other living things for food
herbivore: an animal that eats only plants
carnivore: an animal that eats other animals
decomposer: a living thing that breaks down dead plants and animals

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Food Chain

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Food Chain

Easier · 133 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.5

1. How energy moves from one living thing to the next when one is eaten.
2. It uses sunlight to make its own food.
3. The grasshopper.
4. A herbivore eats only plants. A carnivore eats other animals.
5. They break down dead plants and animals and put nutrients back in the soil.
6. The frogs would have less to eat. Some might go hungry or have to find other food.

Triangle: The Food Chain

This passage · 135 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.6

1. How energy moves from one living thing to another when they are eaten.
2. It uses sunlight to make its own food.
3. The grasshopper.
4. A herbivore eats only plants. A carnivore eats other animals.
5. They break down dead plants and animals and return nutrients to the soil.
6. The frogs would have less to eat, and some might go hungry or have to find other food.

Square: The Food Chain

Harder · 158 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.1

1. How energy is transferred from one living thing to another when one is eaten.
2. It uses sunlight to manufacture its own food.
3. The grasshopper.
4. Herbivores consume only plants. Carnivores consume other animals.
5. They break down dead plants and animals and return nutrients to the soil.
6. The frogs would have less food, so some might go hungry or need to find other food.