

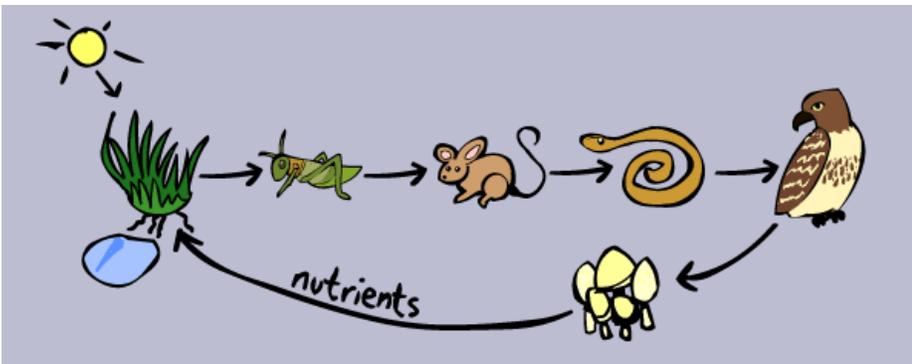
# FOOD CHAIN STUDY GUIDE

All organisms need a source of energy to live. The primary source of energy is the sun. Producers use the energy from the sun to get food. This is called photosynthesis. Producers PRODUCE their own food. Examples of producers are plants such as grass, trees, wild flowers, and moss. These are at the base level of the food chain.

Some organisms must CONSUME other organisms to get energy or food. These organisms are called consumers. Examples of plant eater consumers called herbivores: cow, caterpillar, moose and rabbits. Omnivores eat both plants and animals. A grizzly bear, raccoon, and humans are examples of omnivores. Carnivores are consumers that eat only meat. These are usually at the top level of a food chain. The following organisms are carnivores: lion, sharks, polar bears, and wolves.

Some plants are "carnivorous" meaning that they get energy from both the sun and from insects. Carnivorous plants are usually found where the soil lacks nutrients. A famous carnivorous plant is the Venus Fly Trap that is native to southeastern NC.

Scavengers and Decomposers play an important part in the food chain. A scavenger is an animal that feeds on dead organisms, rather than or in addition to hunting live prey. Vultures, hyenas, and wolves are scavengers. Decomposers play an important part of the food cycle because decomposition is needed to recycle dead remains back to the soil. If there were no decomposers the ecosystem would eventually die out do to the lack of energy transfer. Examples of decomposers are fungus, worms, bacteria, and mushrooms.



The image above is a food chain. The arrows in a food chain represent the flow of energy not the direction of who eats who. Can you find the primary energy source? The producer? The consumers? The Scavengers? The decomposers? What about the carnivores, omnivores, and herbivores?

The image to the right is a food web. A food web consists of many food chains. A food chain only follows just one path as animals find food. eg: A hawk eats a snake, which has eaten a frog, which has eaten a grasshopper, which has eaten grass. A food web shows the many different paths plants and animals are connected.

