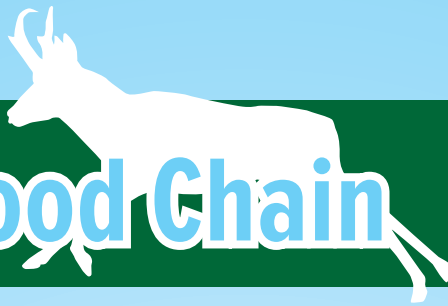


Links in a Food Chain



Goals:

Students will learn what a food chain is and sing or act out the rhyme "There Once Was a Daisy".

Objectives:

- Define food chain.
- Give an example of a food chain and name the animals in it.

Grade Level: K-4

Subject Areas:

science, language arts and creative arts

Materials Needed:

- slips of paper
- copies of the rhyme "There Once Was a Daisy"
- construction paper (optional)
- scissors (optional)
- materials for making costumes (optional)

To help your kids understand what a food chain is and how predators fit into food chains, have them sing or act out "There Once Was a Daisy", a rhyme based on the familiar children's song called "There Was an Old Lady (Who Swallowed a Fly)." But before the kids "perform," discuss the concept of food chains.

Food Chains

Food chains are the routes along which energy flows through a natural community. Most communities have several food chains, many of which interconnect. Two or more interconnecting food chains make up what's known as a food web. No matter what type of natural community you're talking about—a pine forest, a desert, or a coral reef, for example—the flow of energy almost always starts with the sun. So the sun is an important link in food chains. Through photosynthesis, plants—another link—convert the sun's energy into a form the plants can use.

The flow of energy continues as animals such as rabbits and deer eat the plants in their communities. Predators eat the plant-eating animals (and also some of the plants), and some of these predators are eaten by top predators.

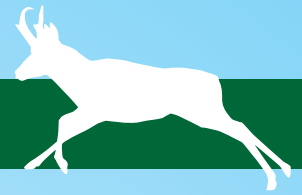
But the flow of energy doesn't end with predators. They and all of the other organisms in a community eventually die, and their bodies are broken down in to simpler compounds by decomposers such as bacteria and fungi. The decomposed matter adds nutrients to the soil, encouraging plant growth. And a "new" food chain gets started.

Performance

When you've finished reviewing food chains, have the kids perform "There Once Was a Daisy." Pass out copies of the rhyme and either have the kids sing it (the tune is basically the same as that of "There Was an Old Lady") or have them act it out as a mini-play. Here's how to put on the play:

1. Write the words daisy, bug, wren, snake, fox, and last verse on separate slips of paper and put them into a sack.
2. Divide the group into six teams and have each team pick one of the slips of paper. Each team will be reciting the lines that correspond to the plant or animal written on the slip. (See the rhyme for the specific lines each team will recite.)
3. Pass out a copy of the rhyme to each person and have the kids underline or highlight the lines in each verse that their team will be reciting.
4. When it's time for the mini-play to start, have all of the teams line up, side by side, in the order they'll be saying their lines. Have the daisy team start the play by reciting the entire first verse. The bug team should follow by reciting the first two lines of the second verse:

Links in a Food Chain



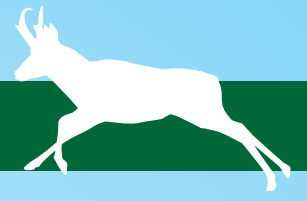
"There once was a bug who nibbled on flowers,
nibbled on flowers for hours and hours!" Then the
daisy team can pick up with the next two lines of the
verse: "The bug ate the daisy that grew on the plain,
where the sun helped it grow, and so did the rain..."
And all of the teams can recite the last line: "Links in
a food chain." Have the teams continue saying their
lines in turn until they've recited the whole rhyme.

5. Have the kids perform the mini-play several times so they can really get a feeling for how a food chain works. (You might want to have the teams switch roles with each performance.)

6. After the final performance, draw a large circle where everyone can see it. Cut out a construction paper picture of each food chain member, then have a person from each team put that team's food chain member in the appropriate place on the circle (see diagram below).

Just for fun, try having the kids make simple costumes for the mini-play. For example, the bug team could make construction paper headbands with antennae, and the daisy team could make big paper flowers to wear around their necks.

Links in a Food Chain



There Once Was a Daisy

Daisy Team: There once was a daisy that grew on a plain,
Where the sun helped it grow, and so did the rain—
Links in a food chain.

Bug Team: There once was a bug who nibbled on flowers,
Nibbled on flowers for hours and hours!

Daisy Team: The bug ate the daisy that grew on the plain,
Where the sun helped it grow, and so did the rain—

All: Links in a food chain.

Wren Team: There once was a wren who gobbled up bugs,
And creepies and crawlies and slimies and slugs.

Bug Team: The wren ate the bug, who nibbled on flowers,
Nibbled on flowers for hours and hours!

Daisy Team: The bug ate the daisy that grew on the plain,
Where the sun helped it grow, and so did the rain—

All: Links in a food chain.

Snake Team: There once was a snake who often grabbed birds,
And swallowed them whole, or so I have heard.

Wren Team: The snake ate the wren, who gobbled up bugs,
And creepies and crawlies and slimies and slugs.

Bug Team: The wren ate the bug, who nibbled on flowers,
Nibbled on flowers for hours and hours!

Daisy Team: The bug ate the daisy that grew on the plain,
Where the sun helped it grow, and so did the rain—

All: Links in a food chain.

Fox Team: There once was a fox, and I'll make a bet:
He'd eat anything he could possibly get.

Snake Team: The fox ate the snake, who often grabbed birds,
And swallowed them whole, or so I have heard.

Wren Team: The snake ate the wren, who gobbled up bugs,
And creepies and crawlies and slimies and slugs.

Bug Team: The wren ate the bug, who nibbled on flowers,
Nibbled on flowers for hours and hours!

Daisy Team: The bug ate the daisy that grew on the plain,
Where the sun helped it grow, and so did the rain—

All: Links in a food chain.

Last Verse Team: The fox, he grew older and died one spring day,
But he made the soil rich when he rotted away.
A new daisy grew where he died on the plain.
The sun helped it grow, and so did the rain
Links in a food chain.