

Food Chains

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What is a Food Chain?

A **food chain** shows how each living thing gets food and how nutrients and energy are passed from creature to creature.

Food chains begin with plant-life and end with animal-life.

The parts of a food chain are **producers**, **consumers**, and **decomposers**.

Producers

Producers are plants that produce, or create, their own food by using light energy from the sun, carbon dioxide from the air, and water from the soil.

This process of creating their own food is called **photosynthesis**.

Process of photosynthesis:



Consumers

Animals are **consumers**. Animals cannot produce their own food, so they get their food and energy by consuming (eating) other plants and animals.

There are 3 groups of consumers:
carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores.

Consumers (Carnivores)

Carnivores are consumers that eat only animals.



Consumers (Herbivores)

Herbivores are consumers that eat only plants.



Consumers (Omnivores)

Omnivores are consumers that eat both plants and animals.



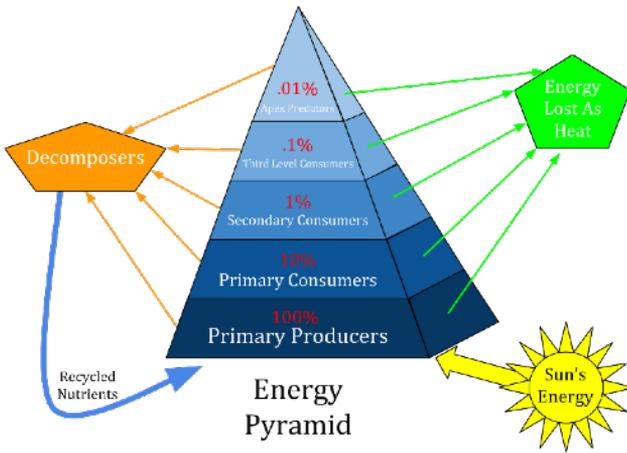
Decomposers

Bacteria and fungi are **decomposers**. They eat dead plants and animals, break them down and decompose or dispose of them. When that happens, they release nutrients and minerals back into the soil - which are then used by plants!



Energy Pyramids

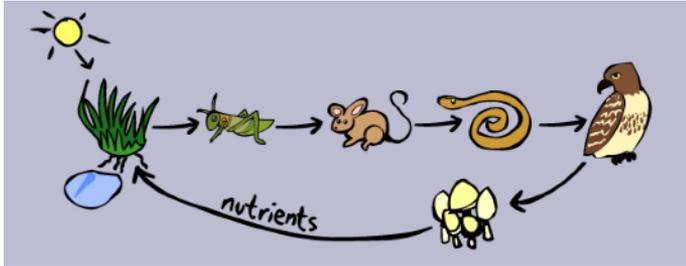
Food chains make a full circle, and energy is passed down from each part of the food chain.



Energy pyramids are models that show the flow of energy from one level in a food chain to the next.

10% of energy is lost between each level, with producers starting with 100% of energy.

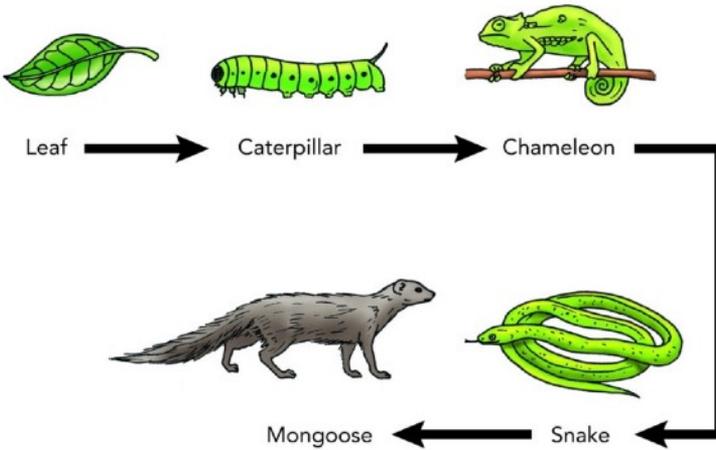
Example Food Chains



Producer: grass

Consumers: cricket, mouse, snake, hawk

Decomposers: mushrooms



Producer: leaf

Consumers: caterpillar, chameleon, snake, mongoose

Glossary

Food chain: Shows how each living thing gets food, and how nutrients and energy are passed from creature to creature.

Producers: Plants that produce, or create, their own food by using light energy from the sun, carbon dioxide from the air, and water from the soil.

Consumers: Animals that cannot produce their own food, so they get their food and energy by consuming (eating) other plants and animals.

Decomposers: Bacteria and fungi that eat decaying matter (dead plants and animals), break them down and decompose them.

Photosynthesis: The process that producers use to create their own food.

Carnivore: Consumers that eat only animals.

Herbivore: Consumers that only eat plants.

Omnivore: Consumers that eat both plants and animals.

Energy Pyramid: A model that shows the flow of energy from one level in a food chain to the next.

Works Referenced

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Common Core State Standards

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Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.

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Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.

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