

WILD NEIGHBORHOODS

3RD-6TH GRADE

NGSS: 3-LS2, LS3, LS4; 4-LS1; 5-LS1, LS2, PS3

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Identify elements of a food chain.
2. Describe how skull anatomy correlates with diet.
3. Understand that organisms have traits that help them fill a niche.
4. Explain how energy cycles through an ecosystem.

PRE-TRIP DISCUSSION TOPICS

- How can we show respect to nature?
- How can we help protect plants, animals, and the environment when we visit natural spaces?
- What is a food chain and why would it be more accurate to describe it as a food circle?
- What role (niche) do decomposers like bacteria and fungi play in an ecosystem?
- Are humans part of food chains?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

FOOD PYRAMID

Supplies: Energy pyramid template (linked in Resources), organism images (same link), glue, scissors

1. Print the energy pyramid template and organism images or have students create their own. The pyramid should have four tiers (as shown below).
2. Have students cut out the organisms.
3. Review each tier of the pyramid and the associated vocabulary (producer/autotroph, consumer/heterotroph, herbivore, carnivore, omnivore, primary consumer, secondary consumer, etc.). Describe how the pyramid helps us visualize how organisms depend on each other for energy and how that energy moves up the pyramid.
4. Ask students to place each of the organisms within the pyramid.
5. Scavengers, detritivores, and decomposers are placed outside of the pyramid. Discuss why that is and how these organisms fit into food cycles.



- KEY TERMS -

ECOSYSTEM

The interacting parts of an environment that include living (plants, animals, etc.) and non-living (rocks, water, etc.) things.

FOOD CHAIN

The order in which living things depend on each other for food (what eats what).

PRODUCERS

Organisms that make their own food (e.g. plants).

CONSUMERS

Organisms that need to eat other organisms (e.g. animals).

DECOMPOSERS

Organisms that break down dead plant or animal matter.

NICHE

A role, or job, in an ecosystem.

ADAPTATION

A trait that makes a species good at living in its environment and more likely to survive, such as by not getting eaten or finding food.

- RESOURCES -

HANDOUTS

[Energy Pyramid Activity](#)

WEBSITE

[BrainPop Energy Pyramid](#)

VIDEOS

[BrainPop Energy Pyramid](#)

[Crash Coruse Kids Food Webs](#)

[BrainPop Food Chain](#)



THE WILDLANDS CONSERVANCY
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