

Amanda Hayward and Jessica Strange
Science Methods
Professor Stetzel
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Food Chain: What's for Dinner?

Grade Level: 4th Grade

Standards:

4.4.3 Observe and describe that organisms interact with one another in various ways, such as providing food, pollination, and seed dispersal.

4.4.4 Observe and describe that some source of energy is needed for all organisms to stay alive and grow.

Objectives:

- When given a blank food chain with pictures, the student will be able to put the pictures in the right order with 80% accuracy.
- When asked how animals interact, the student will be able to provide two examples with 100% accuracy.

Materials:

Big Blank Food Chain, 5 Smaller Food Chains, Pictures of Animal, Tokens of Food, Envelopes for each student, A place to run, Worksheets of Balanced Diets

Introduction:

How many of you ate breakfast this morning? What did you have? Many people eat things such as eggs, bacon, sausage, or ham for breakfast. Where do these things come from? That's right they are from animals. Just like humans, all animals need food to stay alive. Today we are going to talk about a cycle that keeps animals alive by eating other animals and plants for energy.

Procedures:

Step 1: Discuss what a food chain is. Define the words omnivore, carnivore, herbivore, producer, consumer, and energy.

Step 2: Show them the blank big food chain and the animals that we are going to place on it.

Step 3: Split the class into groups of 5.

Step 4: Give each group a blank food chain and each student a different animal that goes on the food chain.

Step 5: From there have the groups discuss what order they think their food chain goes in and lay the pictures on the food chain in the spots.

Step 6: As a class discuss the order they think the animals go in and have the students glue their pictures down.

Step 7: Discuss how food provides energy and how every animal needs energy to survive.

Step 8: Explain the rules of the Food Energy Game (Spread tokens of food all over the gym floor. Give each student an envelope and have each student gather as many tokens of food as they can. They can only pick up one token at a time and take it back to their envelope.)

Step 9: Go back to the classroom and have the students add up their points and also tally what types of energy they got.

Step 10: See if any students found enough and enough of a variety of food to survive with a healthy diet.

Conclusion: Talk about scarcity of food and how this keeps populations of animals down.

Adaptations/Modifications: Make sure you group the students with a variety of abilities in each group to help with discussion during the food chain talk. If you have a student with a physical disability in your class then make sure you incorporate how animals who aren't as capable of getting food on their own have a difficulty in surviving.

Assessments: We will know this lesson is effective if the students are able to put their food chains together before the class wide discussion. Also, we will use formative assessments to see whether they can answer the questions during class discussions.