

Food Chains and What Animals Eat

30 minutes, 3 stages

You are learning how plants and animals interact with each other ([Outcome](#)). A food chain shows the order in which plants and animals depend on each other for food ([Knowledge](#)). When you understand food chains, you can see how everything in nature is connected.

Stage 1: Sort Animals by What They Eat (10 min)

Animals eat different things. Some eat only plants. Some eat mostly meat. Some eat both ([Knowledge](#)).

Read each animal below. Write it in the correct group.

Animals: cow, lion, bear, rabbit, chicken, snake

Herbivores (eat only plants):

Carnivores (eat only meat):

Omnivores (eat both meat and plants):

Now check your work. A herbivore eats grass and leaves. A carnivore hunts other animals. An omnivore eats both plants and animals, not just one type of food.

Answer key: Herbivores: cow, rabbit. Carnivores: lion, snake. Omnivores: bear, chicken. The bear and the chicken can be tricky because they eat plants like berries or seeds, but they also eat insects or small animals, so they belong with the omnivores. Did you sort them correctly?

Stage 2: Build a Food Chain (12 min)

A food chain shows how plants and animals depend on each other for food ([Knowledge](#)). It starts with a plant and goes in order.

Here is an example:

grass !' rabbit !' fox

The grass feeds the rabbit. The rabbit feeds the fox.

Now build your own food chain. Choose one animal from each group below and write them in order.

Plant: grass, clover, seeds

Herbivore: mouse, deer, caterpillar

Carnivore: owl, hawk, snake

My food chain:

_____ !' _____ !' _____

Draw a picture of your food chain. You can use stick figures or simple shapes.

Stage 3: Answer Questions About Your Chain (8 min)

Look at the food chain you made.

1. Which living thing in your chain needs sunlight to grow? Why?
2. What would happen to the carnivore if all the herbivores disappeared?
3. Can you make a different food chain using the same plant but different animals?

Self-check

Answer these questions to show what you learned.

1. What is the difference between a herbivore and a carnivore?
2. Why do we call it a food chain instead of just a list of animals?
3. Can you name one food chain from your own neighborhood or a place you know?