



WHATTA WEB

4-H Natural Science Lesson



SIMULATE ANIMAL FOOD CHAINS IN A GAME FORMAT

Project Skills:

Understanding food chains

Life Skills:

Problem solving
WI Academic Standards:
Environmental Education
B.4. Knowledge of
Environmental Processes and Systems

Time:

20-25 minutes

Supplies:

- 2 laminated cards of each item in the food chain list
- 2 pieces of 12" yarn per youth
- Large paper & marker or chalkboard & chalk (not supplied)
- Space large enough for children to freely move around.

WHAT TO DO

Brainstorm

1. Ask youth to name animals and some things they eat.
2. Record their responses on a large paper or chalkboard. Use two columns, predator and prey.
3. Continue until the space on the page or blackboard has been filled or the youth can't think of any more examples.

Food Chain		
<u>Plants</u> →	<u>Plant eaters</u> →	<u>Meat eaters</u>
Plants	Grass hopper	Snake
Seeds	Mouse	Hawk
Nuts	Rabbit	Red Fox
	Ladybug	
	Caterpillar	
	Squirrel	

Play Whatta Web

1. Randomly pass out an Animal or Plant laminated card and two pieces of 12" yarn to each child. Cards should be worn so they can easily be seen.
2. Tell youth to find something it eats or something that eats it. They should hold that person's piece of yarn (or hold hands with this person) and together go search for something to eat or something that eats them.
3. Continue this process by adding youth to the ends of the human chain. Youth should continue to hold on to the yarn (or hands) and try to make as long a chain as they can.

Change the conditions and play Whatta Web again

1. It has been a very cold winter and some of the snakes and mice did not survive. Remove the snake and the mouse. Make these youth a plant and a seed.
2. Play the Whatta Web game again.

ENHANCE

Continue to change the conditions and play Whatta Web again. Try a few of these scenarios.

- A new road is built between two ponds. Cars kill many of the red foxes and snakes. Remove the red fox and snake. Make these youth a rabbit and a mouse.
- It has been a very long winter and there has been much more snow than usual. This limits the number of plants and nuts available. Remove the plants and nuts. Reassign these youth to be a hawk and a red fox.

TALK IT OVER

Try to get each youth to express his or her feelings and experiences.

Reflect:

- Why do plants and animals need each other?
- What happened when you removed the snake and the mouse?

Apply:

- Name a food that you eat and trace it back to an animal or plant.
- How do humans sometimes change plant or animal habitats?
- How does nature sometimes change plant or animal habitats?



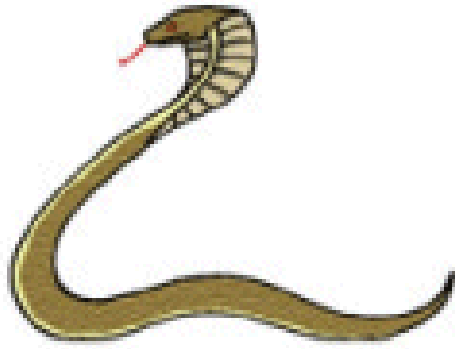
Adapted from Mud, Muck and Other Wonderful Things, pages 37-39.



Plants



Grasshopper



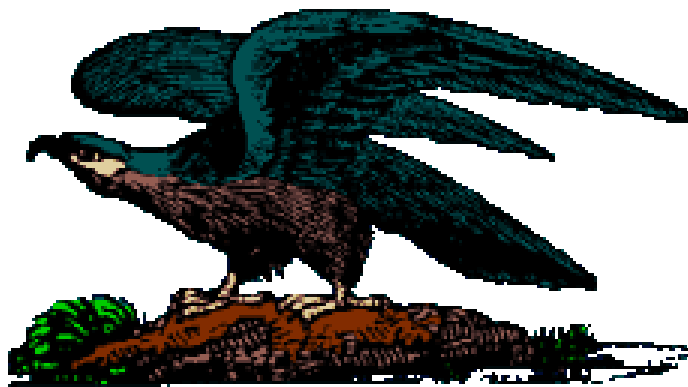
Snake



Seeds



Mouse



Hawk



Nuts



Rabbit



Red Fox



Ladybug



Catterpillar



Squirrel