



**MINNESOTA ZOO**  
Changing how you see the world

# Food Webs Grades 4-6 Pre-visit Activity

## **MN Graduation**

### **Standards supported:**

#### **Grade 2 Strand III. B**

Students will recognize that plants and have different structures that serve various functions.

#### **Grade 2 Strand IV. E**

Students will know that biological populations change over time.

#### **Grade 3 Strand IV. C**

Students will understand that an organism's patterns of behavior are related to its environment.

### **Vocabulary:**

**Habitat:** place or type of place where an organism or community of organisms live and thrive.

**Organism:** any living thing, such as a plant, animal, fungus, bacteria, capable of growth and reproduction.

**Food Chain:** order in which energy is passes through a natural system.

(sunlight-green plant-herbivore-carnivore-decomposer..)

**Food Web:** shows how plants and animals are connected in many ways to help them all survive.

**Herbivore:** plant eater

## **Introduction:**

Animals do not make their own food; they are dependent on plants and/or other animals. A **Food Web** is how energy passes through and ecosystem. A Food Web shows how plants and animals are connected in many ways to help them survive. This activity is designed to initiate a discussion of two specific concepts regarding food interdependence: how all-living things are connected and how environmental changes affect the natural world as a whole.

## **Objectives:**

At the end of this lesson, the students will:

1. Be able to describe the concepts of a food web
2. Identify the importance of an individual species' role in the community
3. Understand that organisms in an ecosystem are interdependent.

## **Procedure:**

1. Gather the following materials: various animal and plant pictures (one per student; include a wide assortment which includes herbivores, carnivores, trees shrubs, etc), 1 ball of yarn.
2. Hand out one animal or plant picture to each student.
3. Have the students stand in a circle holding their picture in front of them so each student can see each other's picture.
4. Pick a student to start the activity by giving them a ball of yarn.
5. The student who has the ball of yarn is to state the name of their plant or animal and the food relationship it has with one of the other pictures in the circle. For example "I am a deer and I eat grass" or "I am a tree and gibbons swing from me."

Carnivore: meat eater

Omnivore: plant and meat eaters

Producers: such as plants, create food energy and oxygen.

Consumers: eat others, either producers or consumers.

Decomposers: eat dead plants and animals

**Links:**

[www.sciencebob.com](http://www.sciencebob.com)

[www.nwf.org/kidzone](http://www.nwf.org/kidzone)  
(Ranger Rick)

[www.arcytech.org](http://www.arcytech.org)  
great food web diagrams and vocabulary terms

## Procedure Continued:

6. The beginning student will hold on to one end of the yarn while tossing the rest of the yarn to the other student.
7. Continue steps 5-6 until all the students in the circle are holding the yarn; creating a WEB!
8. Ask the students “Which animals would be affected by polluted water?” Answers may include: (all animals that depend on water to live, only the animals that live in the water).
9. You can simulate many kinds of scenarios such as: overpopulation leading from animals becoming extinct or a virus attacking a certain species that could lead to overpopulation.
10. After you have completed this activity discuss other habitats and ask for ideas to create another type of web. While at your Minnesota Zoo visit discuss the habitats that the animals are in and how it’s different than a natural habitat.