

Activity #2: Connect the Critters

Introduction

This is a fun, quick activity for younger kids. It will also provide insights for later discussions of ideas like biomagnification.

Time: approx. 30 min.

Ages: up to 6th grade

Materials

- A copy of the **Connect the Critters** handout (p. 13) per student
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Prep Work: gather materials

Procedure

1. Ask for student input: as a class, point out each producer. Have students circle each producer with a green crayon.
2. As a class, find the primary consumers. Circle them with another color. Do the same for secondary and tertiary predators.
3. Now have students draw arrows, with arrows pointing from “eat-en” to “eat-er,” i.e. from plant to herbivore, or consumer to predator.
4. When students are finished, examine drawings as a class. Ask students to think about the assignment as you work through the discussion questions.

Discussion

- Were any animals circled with more than one color? Discuss the terms herbivore (plant-eater), carnivore (meat-eater), and omnivore (plant and meat-eater).
- Is the flow of energy in an ecosystem at all similar to the flow of water in the water cycle? How is it different?
- What happens when one organism is removed? How many of the arrows would disappear? How many animals fed on it?
- What would happen if a poison was introduced to the web at the level of the producers or some of the primary consumers? Introduce the idea of **biomagnification**.