

**Project FOCUS
Best Lessons
FIRST GRADE**

Title of Lesson: Food Chain

Theme: Life Science

Unit Number: 6 **Unit Title:** Animal Planet

Performance Standard(s) Covered (enter code):

S1CS4

S1L1

Enduring Standards (objectives of activity):

Habits of Mind

- Asks questions
- Uses numbers to quantify
- Works in a group
- Uses tools to measure and view
- Looks at how parts of things are needed
- Describes and compares using physical attributes
- Observes using senses
- Draws and describes observations

Content (key terms and topics covered):

Food chain, animals, habitats, animal needs

Learning Activity (Description in Steps)

Abstract(limit 100 characters): Students learn how different organisms living in the same area depend on one another for energy.

Details: I began the lesson by asking the class what they thought a “food chain” was and from there introduced the ideas of meat-eaters, plant-eaters, organisms that eat both, and decomposers. We discussed roles of producers and consumers and how they depend upon each other for survival. I explained to the students that the “scientific” names for meat-eaters, plant-eaters and for animals that eat both are “carnivores,” “herbivores,” and “omnivores,” respectively.

Prior to teaching the lesson I made a poster that served as a visual aid in my explanation of the concept of a food chain. This poster showed the connections between producers and consumers and divided the consumers into herbivores, omnivores, carnivores, and decomposers. The sun was portrayed at the top of this poster to signify the fact that all of the other producers and consumers depend on sunlight as their primary energy source.

On a second poster I labeled four different categories: herbivores, omnivores, carnivores, and decomposers. I also cut out numerous pictures of different types of animals. I tried to find pictures that would fit into each of these four labeled categories

of producers. Lastly, I labeled six index cards with the words: sun, plant, insect, toad, snake, and hawk.

Procedure:

- Discuss “food chains” with the class using a poster that visually depicts the connections between producers and consumers.
- Choose six volunteers from the class and tape one of the six labeled index cards to each child.
- Line these six students up in front of the class in the following order: sun, plant, insect, toad, snake, and lastly, hawk. Explain to the class that this is the order of this particular food chain beginning with the primary producer and ending with a carnivore. The six students should hold hands to indicate that they are all connected.
- Then tell the students labeled “snake” and “hawk” to release hands and ask the class what would happen to the rest of the food chain if there were no hawks. (The class should recognize that without the hawks, none of the other animals would be directly affected because none of them directly depend upon the hawk as their primary nutrition source.)
- Next, all six students should hold hands again and this time tell the students labeled “toad” and “snake” to release hands. Now ask the class what would be the result on the rest of the food chain if there were no snakes? How would this effect the hawk? (The students should understand that without the snakes to eat, the hawks would die.)
- This game should continue until all each of the connections has been examined.
- After completing this game, present the poster that is divided into four different categories. By this time the class should have a fairly thorough idea of the concept of a “food chain” and each student should be allowed to come to the front of the class individually to pick an animal from the assortment of magazine cut-outs.
- After selecting an animal the student should try to figure out into which category on the poster the animal would fit and then tape the picture to the poster so that it is in its’ appropriate category. If the student has a hard time identifying what type of eater the particular animal is, then the class as a whole should discuss and make the decision.
- At the end of the lesson, each of the students should be given a blank index card on which they can draw any animal they choose. Then each of the students should be allowed to come to the front of the class to present their animal and classify it based on its’ source of nutrition

Materials Needed (Type and Quantity):

- Poster depicting an example of an ecological food chain
- Poster divided into 4 categories: herbivores, omnivores, carnivores, and decomposers
- Magazine cut-outs of animals
- Blank index cards (enough for each of the students)

- 6 index cards labeled: sun, plant, insect, toad, snake, hawk
- Crayons

Notes and Tips (suggested changes, alternative methods, cautions):

Sources/References:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)