



Construct a Food Web

Class Activity for Younger and Older Students

Description: In this activity, the class constructs a food web as a group.

Materials: Whiteboard or large paper and markers

Time: 30 minutes

For older students (late middle / high school):

1. Ask students to volunteer to come up to the board for this portion of the lesson. The goal will be to draw a food web on the board (or butcher paper) that incorporates all of the species from the species social.
2. Call out organisms in the following categories. Have students that fit into each group stand up and draw their organism on the board and connect it to any other organisms that it interacts with. If someone mentions an organism that hasn't been drawn yet, that student should go next.

For example: Start with **primary producers (algae)**. Have any students with algae draw their species on the board and explain what they interact with. They will likely mention things that eat algae, **grazers** such as urchins and snails. Have those students go next, and end with **top predators** like the sunflower star and sea otters.

3. When the web is complete, spend a few minutes asking questions like "How would this web be affected if [choose a species] disappeared?" or "If urchins increased, what would happen to kelp?"
4. Go over the "actual" kelp forest food web and example trophic cascade slides.

For younger students (early middle school)

1. After the social, have students bring their worksheets with them into a large circle facing each other. You will want a couple of balls of string. Tell the students that you represent the sun in this kelp ecosystem. Ask: “Is anyone dependent on the sun? Does anyone get energy from the sun or photosynthesis? “
2. All **primary producers (algae)** will raise their hand. Holding onto the ends of the string, pass a ball to each primary producer. Ask these students if there is anything that depends on them? Does anyone get energy from them? Have them each identify another organism that they can pass the ball of string to. They should hold onto the string and let it unwind as they pass to another student.
3. Continue this process until all or most students are connected one or more times. Add in additional connections by asking questions like: Do you hurt or help any other species? Are there species that hurt or help you? Is there anything that they depend on? Where do you get your energy? What species depend on you?



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