

Lions, Tigers & Monsters, Oh My!

Day 2: It's Dinner Time!

Teacher/Parent Background:

Lions, tigers and monsters? Yes, you read that correctly; monsters! By creating a unique monster, students will apply their understanding of the needs of living things and their roles in their environments. All animals and plants (including monsters!) have internal structures and external structures that help them survive, grow and behave in their environments. Living things need ways/strategies to obtain the energy they need to survive in their environments. Some living things, called consumers, directly consume other living things for food. Other living things, called producers, produce their own food using sunlight, water and gases in the surrounding air. In science, we describe the possible path energy can take through an ecosystem, between one living thing to the next, as a food chain. A food web can be described as an interconnected set of food chains.

Overview:

In this activity, students will create a food chain and a food web to show the feeding relationships between their monster and other living things in their ecosystems.

Related Standards:

- Develop and use a model to explain how natural selection may lead to increases and decreases of specific traits in populations over time.

Key Terms:

- Producers: living things that make their own food.
- Consumers: living things that eat other living things for food.
- Food Web: an interconnected set of food chains.
- Carnivore: an organism that eats other animals.
- Herbivore: an organism that eats plants.

Materials List:

- Pen/pencil
- Possible visual representation resources:
 - Colored pencils/crayons/markers
 - Internet access for images/pictures
- Internet access - optional for *Extensions*

- Computer/phone with audio - optional for *Extensions*
- *Student Resources - Pages 4-5*
 - *My Monster's Food Chain & Food Web*

Activity Description:

- As we continue this project, we still need to know a few things about your monster! One of which is how your monster gets the energy it needs to survive and grow. Just like us, some living things called *consumers*, eat other living things for food.
 - For example:
 - A wolf eats a deer to get the energy it needs.
- Other living things call *producers*, make their own food using resources in its environment, like sunlight and water.
 - For example:
 - Plants, trees and bushes make their own food to get the energy they need.
- In science, we organize these feeding relationships using a food chain. A *food chain* shows a path energy can take through an ecosystem, from one living thing to the next.
- Scientists also use a *food web* to show many paths energy can take through an ecosystem, illustrating multiple feeding relationships. Think of a food web as a web/system of interconnected food chains!
- Today, you are going to create your monster's food chain and food web by answering the following questions:
 - What does your monster eat in its ecosystem?
 - How does it eat? What structures help it eat?
 - What eats your monster in its ecosystem?
 - How does that living thing eat? What structures help it eat?
- To help you get started, we are going to explore a possible food chain and food web for your monster!
 - Engage students as they follow the instructions in the student handout.
 - Encourage students to use colored pencils/crayons/markers to help them illustrate the food chain and food web.

Closure:

- After the activity has concluded, engage in a discussion with students:
 - How would you describe your monster's food chain and food web?
 - Now that you have created your monster's food chain and food web, what changes do you want to make to your monster/monster's structures to make sure it is best suited to live in its ecosystem? Are there any changes you want to make to your ecosystem's living things?

- Feel free to update your *Monster's Portrait* from Day 1 and your *Monster's Ecosystem* from Day 2!

Extensions:

Watch! Crash Course Kids - [Fabulous Food Chains](#) & [Food Webs](#)

Student Resources

My Monster's Food Chain & Food Web

1. Think about the environment your monster lives in
2. Brainstorm the different organisms that live in your monster's habitat (your organisms can be real or imaginary monsters, as well).
3. Record your ideas by writing/drawing the organisms under the correct categories below.

Producers
Consumers

4. Circle all the carnivores and draw a square around all of the herbivores in the table above.

5. Now, draw a simple food chain of organisms found in your habitat beginning with the Sun. Be sure to include the main source of energy in your chain.

Food Chain

5. Create a food web of organisms in your habitat. Be sure to show how energy flows (using arrows) from the Sun through the different food chains in the food web.

Food Web

- Be sure to include names and drawings of the living things and your monster.
- Don't forget to include arrows to show the path of energy!