

DAISY ECOLOGY

An activity in which students recite a poem that illustrates the concept of a food chain.

ARIZONA SCIENCE STANDARDS SC03-S3C1-01/02;SC05-SC3C1-02;SC04-SCC1-01;SC03-S4C4-01/03;SC03-S4C3-01;SC04-S4C1-02;SC03-S4C1-01;SC03-S4C3-04;SC04-S4C1-02

OBJECTIVES

Students should:

- Recite the poem “There once was a Daisy.”
- Understand that ecological “links” are connected and cycle through sun, soil, rain, herbivores, carnivores, omnivores, scavengers and decomposers.
- Create a food chain poem using Sonoran Desert plants and animals.

VOCABULARY

food chain
producer
primary consumer
secondary consumer
herbivore
carnivore
omnivore
scavenger
decomposer

GETTING READY

- 1) Prepare the materials as listed in the left margin of this page.
- 2) Review a food chain sequence (for your own information).

DOING THE ACTIVITY

SETTING THE STAGE

Review with the children a simple **food chain**. Write the following on the board:

seeds → kangaroo rat → snake
→ owl → vulture → mushroom

Ask the students what this represents. Explain that there are many food chains in nature and that they will be reading a poem about a food chain.

READING THE POEM

- 1) Read the poem to the children and just have them listen. Ask them some simple questions after the reading: Who remembers how this poem started?: (With the daisy). How did it end: (Daisy again). What did the bug eat? (Daisy). And so on.
- 2) Hand out copies of the poem to students.
- 3) Divide the class into teams for each part of the poem.
- 4) Send teams to different areas of the room (or outside) to practice their parts. Tell students how long they will have to practice. Let them know when they have about one minute left.
- 5) Gather the class back together. Have the children read their parts as teams.

DISCUSSION

- 1) Have students draw the food chain on a piece of paper:
- 2) Have children name the **producer** (daisy), the **herbivore (primary consumer)** - (bug), the **carnivore (secondary consumer)** - (wren); the next secondary consumer and **carnivore** - (snake), the **omnivore** (fox). Write these on the board under the corresponding plant or animal.
- 3) What would happen if you removed the bug? (The wren wouldn't have anything to eat and everything that follows on the food chain wouldn't work either.) Explain that food chains really aren't this simple; many components of the environment actually interact with each other to form more of a web.
- 4) What happened to the fox at the end? (He died). Then what happened to his body? (Went back into the soil). Explain that **scavengers** (like vultures) would eat part of his body and the rest would be acted upon by **decomposers** (fungi, bacteria, earthworms, millipedes, pillbugs) that would turn the remains into soil.

EXTENSIONS

- Have the students work in groups to make up a new Sonoran Desert food chain poem. Change the animals so that the poem is appropriate for the Sonoran Desert.
- Make a bulletin board display illustrating the food chain represented in the poem.
- Have children draw pictures illustrating the story of the food chain.