

Food Chain Snakes Post Activity

Program at Nature Station: Nature Detectives

Grade Level: K – 2nd

Program Length:

Prep Time – 20 minutes.

Activity time – 30 + minutes

Group size: 5 – 30

Setting: Classroom

Vocabulary and Concepts:

- basic needs – anything an organism needs to live: air, water, food, shelter, light & living space
- food chain – the transfer of food energy from the source in plants through a series of animals eating and being eaten
- habitat – an area that provides an animal or plant with adequate food, water, shelter and living space

Materials:

- chalkboard or easel paper
- 8 ½” x 11” sheets light colored paper
- glue or tape
- crayons or markers
- pictures of a leafy plant, a grasshopper, and a bird (example blue jay) that eats insects (magazines are a good source)

Background Information:

Living organisms have basic needs. For example, plants need air, water, nutrients and sunlight. They can only survive if their needs are met. Plants make their own food. All animals depend on plants. Some animals eat plants for food. Other animals eat animals that eat the plants.

The students will create a paper chain-link snake that illustrates a plant’s basic needs and how all animals depend on plants. This will also illustrate a simple food chain.

Preparation

Create one snakehead per student. Cut the colored paper into triangles that are 2” per side. Trim the corners so they are rounded.

Create the materials for the snake's body. Cut the colored paper into 8 ½" x 1" strips. Each student will need 6 strips. You will want to create a completed snake as an example for the students.

Procedure:

1. Review the concept of how living things have basic needs that must be met in order for them to survive. The place where they gather their basic needs is their habitat. Ask the students, "What do plants need so they can grow?"
2. List their answers on the chalkboard or easel paper. In general, plants need air, water, soil, and sunlight. Explain how plants take these basic needs and make their own food using energy from the sun. Draw as a diagram on the chalkboard or easel paper.
3. Explain how all other animals depend on plants for food. The plants make their own food (show picture of leafy plant). Some animals eat plants for food (show picture of grasshopper). Other animals eat animals that eat the plants (show picture of a bird). This is an example of a food chain. Draw as a diagram on the chalkboard or easel paper.
4. Tell the students that they are going to make a paper chain-link snake craft that shows how all animals depend on the plants for food. Pass out the materials and display your prepared example.
5. Have the students draw the sun on one of their paper strips. Next, have them create a loop by attaching one end of this strip to the other end using tape or glue. Make sure that their drawing is on the outer side of the loop so it is easily seen.
6. On their second paper strip, have them draw clouds for air and raindrops for water. Thread this strip through the "sun" loop that they just made. Attach this strip's ends together to form a second loop linked with the first. Make sure their drawings are on the outer side of the loop.
7. Repeat this process for the next four links in the paper chain: on the third strip, draw soil; a leafy plant on the fourth strip; a grasshopper on the fifth; and finally a bird on the sixth. These paper chain links form the snake's body.
8. The students can then draw a face (i.e., eyes, tongue) on the triangular paper snakehead. Attach the head to the first link that has the sun drawing.

Assessment or Evaluation:

What are the basic needs that plants use to make their own food?

What might happen to a bird that eats insects if the plants died where it lived?