

Life in a Meadow

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Psssst. Hey, come here. Read me! I have something I need to tell you. Do you know how everything in the whole world stays alive? They live on a thing called **food webs**. I want to teach you how they work. We are going to focus on one food web in a meadow.

Producers are the first step in a food web. Do you want to know about them? If no, then you can stop reading. Producers are plants that get energy from the sun. Grass is a producer in a meadow. Producers don't eat anything since they make their own food. When producers make food it is called **photosynthesis**. All producers are plants but not all plants are



producers. Some plants (like venus fly traps) need to eat to survive. Now let's see what happens next in a food chain.

Here are some facts about the second step in a food web, **consumers**. Consumers need to eat for energy. There are two different types of consumers. One (**primary consumers**) only eat plants. The other (**secondary consumers**) eat meat. A rabbit is a primary consumer in a meadow. It eats plants, but not other animals. So it might eat our grass from earlier. Primary consumers are also called herbivores. They are like vegetarians, in the way that they refuse to eat meat. Now let's learn about secondary consumers. In a meadow a fox is an example of a secondary consumer. It could eat the rabbit. Some secondary consumers eat plants and meat. They are called omnivores. Other secondary consumers eat just meat. They are called carnivores. Now what can possibly be the last step in a food web?

The third and final step of a food web is **decomposers**. Decomposers break down dead plants and animals into the soil to help the plants grow. Then we're back at step one. Worms are decomposers that you can find in a meadow. If the fox dies, the worm may break it down to help

the grass from the beginning grow. Decomposers are often used in composting. Decomposers are the "gross things" (worms, mold, fungi, bacteria, etc). When decomposers break down things it's good for the soil. Guess what? You just went through a whole food web! Congratulations!

Now you know what food webs are and how all parts are important. The **sun** starts the food web by giving energy to producers. The producers use photosynthesis to change the energy into food. Next is the consumers who have to eat for energy. Some eat plants, some eat meat, and some eat both. And now our final step, decomposers. Those are the guys who break down dead plants and animals and return their nutrients to the soil so new plants can grow. As you now know, a food web is the balance of life. If you alter one thing the slightest bit, everything could be messed up, so try your hardest to protect wildlife and the food webs in meadows, and everywhere. You can be the one to save the world.

GLOSSARY

(In a full food web)

Food Webs-

The connection of plants and animals in an ecosystem.

Sun-

The start of all energy in a food web.

Producers-

Organisms that use photosynthesis to gain energy.

Photosynthesis-

The process where plants use the sun's energy for food.

Consumers-

Organisms that need to eat for energy.

Primary Consumers-

Organisms that only eat plants.

Secondary Consumers-

Organisms that eat meat

Decomposers-

Organisms that break down dead plants and animals and return the nutrients to the soil.