

Make A Food Chain

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about marine food chains and where humans fit into a food chain.

TIME REQUIRED

15 minutes

BACKGROUND

Animals that eat other organisms are part of a food chain.

MATERIALS

- Worksheets with pictures:
 - ◆ Sun
 - ◆ Phytoplankton
 - ◆ Zooplankton
 - ◆ Small fish
 - ◆ Larger fish
 - ◆ Fur Seal
 - ◆ Harbor seal
 - ◆ Baleen whale
 - ◆ Killer whale
 - ◆ Human
- Optional – used stuffed animals instead of, or with, the cards

PROCEDURE

- Ask if students know what a food chain is. Describe how a food chain shows how energy is passed from one organism to another (or, another way to say it is “when an animal eats another animal and that animal is eaten by another animal”). Ask kids to talk about simple food chains that they know about (cat eats mouse eats grain seed, which gets its energy from the sun). Emphasize that plants make their own energy from the sun, and the sun is at the beginning of a food chain.
- Working with a group of five to six students, have them choose pictures from the worksheet. Line them up in order: sun, phytoplankton, zooplankton, small fish, larger fish, seal. Explain that phytoplank are tiny plants in the ocean that get their energy from the sun and zooplankton are tiny animals, and that the sun is at the beginning of a marine food chain.
- Repeat this exercise a few times, with different animals. Have the students line themselves up in the correct order. Sing a song about food chains – one option is a song that is adapted from a song called “Slippery Fish” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g67pk7gXJLo&feature=related>)

Big round sun, big round sun, shining on the water,
Big round sun, big round sun, shining on the water,
Big round sun, big round sun, GULP GULP GULP!
Oh no, it’s been eaten by a.....

Plankton, plankton, floating in the water....

Zooplankton, zooplankton, wiggling in the water...

Small fish, small fish, slipping in the water....

Larger fish, larger fish, swimming in the water....

Fur seal, fur seal, flying through the water....

Sea lion, sea lion, playing in the water....

And so on.

- Examples of food chains that you can make:
 - ◆ Sun, phytoplankton, zooplankton, small fish, fur seal
 - ◆ Sun, phytoplankton, zooplankton, baleen whale
 - ◆ Sun, phytoplankton, zooplankton, small fish, large fish, killer whale
 - ◆ Sun, phytoplankton, zooplankton, small fish, fur seal, person
 - ◆ Sun, phytoplankton, zooplankton, small fish, large fish, person

DISCUSSION

Discuss what all the food chains have in common (they all start with sun, phytoplankton, zooplankton)

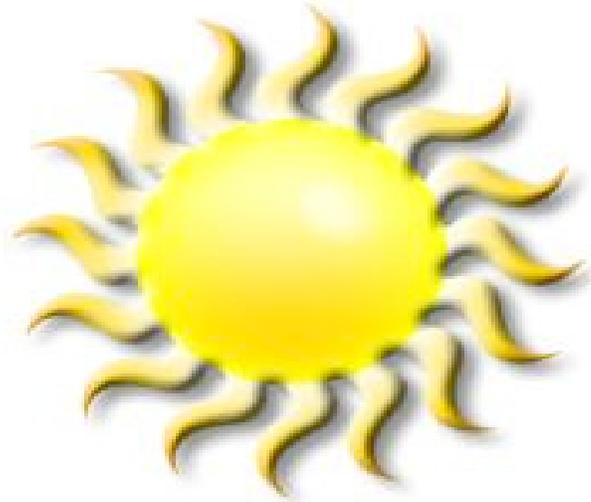
Discuss what might happen if the phytoplankton or zooplankton disappeared.

The other animals wouldn't have enough to eat.

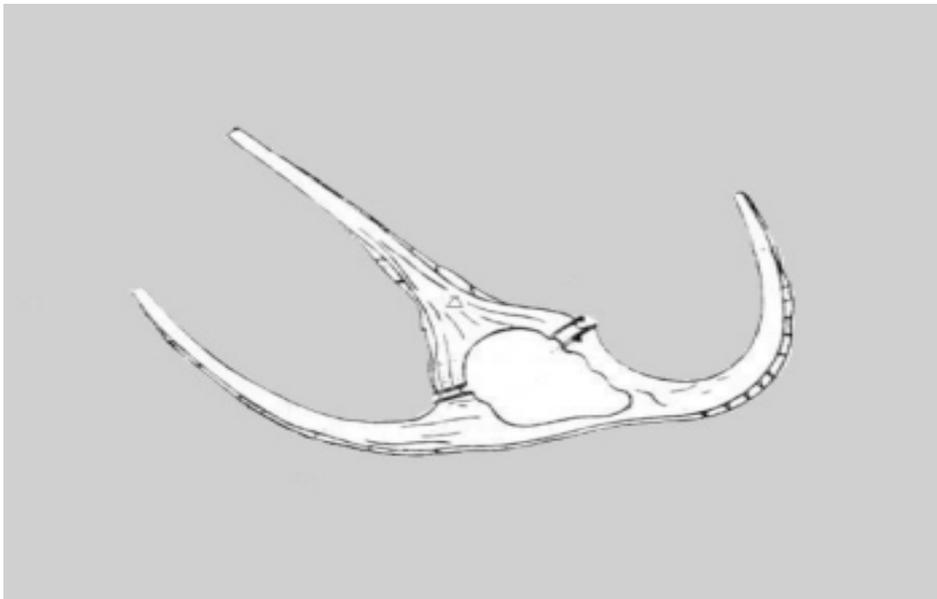
EXTENSION

Optional individual activity: make several copies of the food chain cards, mix them up and lay them on a table. Ask students to make their own food chains, and explain them to you.

- Optional extension: make a food chain of each student’s favorite food.
 - ◆ Example: if the favorite food is macaroni and cheese, talk about what macaroni is made from (wheat) and where cheese comes from (milk, from a cow), and then draw a food chain:
 - Macaroni: Sun, wheat (which is made into pasta), STUDENT
 - Cheese: Sun, plants, cow (makes milk which is made into cheese), STUDENT



Sun



phytoplankton



zooplankton



Pacific sand lance



salmon



northern fur seal



harbor seal



killer whales



humpback (baleen) whales



human