

Name: _____

What is a food chain? **Teacher Guide**

Before we discover how important fish are to the oceans, we need to learn how animals depend on each other.

All living things need energy and nutrients to survive, but they can get these things in different ways.

Plants, seaweeds, and algae make their own energy using light they capture from the sun and nutrients they absorb from the soil or water they live in. These living things are called **producers**, because they *produce* their own energy. Without producers, animals could not survive.

Animals cannot make their own energy. Instead, they get energy by eating plants, algae, or other animals. An animal that eats a producer is called an **herbivore**. An animal that eats other animals is called a **carnivore** or **predator**. Animals that are eaten by predators are called **prey**.

We can show the feeding relationships between producers and animals with a **food chain**. It's a way to show how energy and nutrients move between producers and animals in a habitat. In other words, how living things are connected by what they eat.

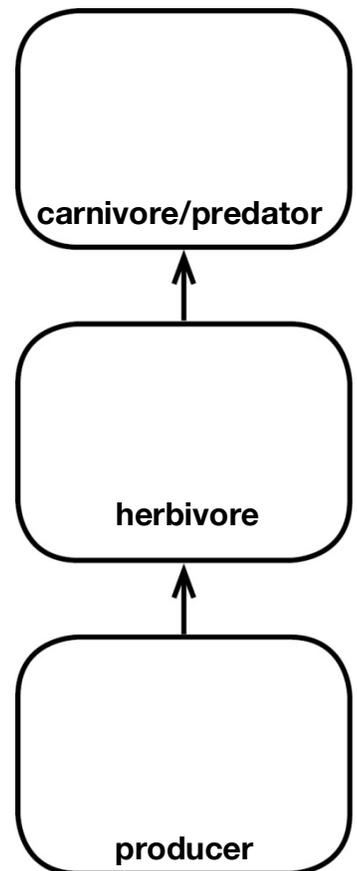
Let's make a food chain. Think of an animal you like. Maybe one you've read about, seen in a video, or observed in real life.

Now, write your answers to the questions below. They will help you decide where your animal fits in the food chain. Is your animal an herbivore? A carnivore?

- What do you think your animal eats?
- What predators does it have?
- What special body parts does this animal have for getting food and avoiding predators?

In the boxes to the right, draw a food chain using your ocean animal.

We look forward to seeing you for a fish dissection with Birch Aquarium!



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Recommended videos that discuss food chains, food webs in habitats, and what happens when habitats change:

“Fabulous Food Chains: Crash Course Kids #7.1”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUKs9o1s8h8>

“Home Sweet Habitat & Food Webs: Crash Course Kids #21.1”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p15IrEuhYmo>

“Food Webs: Crash Course Kids #21.2”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_2947446199&feature=iv&src_vid=p15IrEuhYmo&v=Vtb3l8VzIfg