

Food Chain Gang

Students will learn about Everglades producers, consumers, and food chains.

Objectives:

Students will be able to define herbivore, carnivore, and omnivore listing three Everglades animals found in each group and will be able to describe three Everglades food chains.

Materials:

Alphabet picture cards from this guide, red, green, and yellow construction paper, small plastic baggies with a horizontal line drawn across the middle, masking tape or glue, and a box of poker chips or a large bag of popcorn.

Methods:

Running activity - play as you would tag.

Subjects:

Science, P.E.

Duration:

30 to 45 minutes

Location:

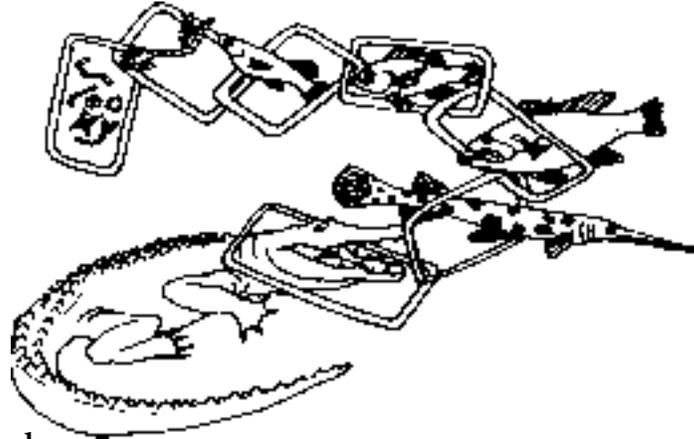
Outdoors, cafeteria, or gym.

Related Activities:

Finding Home: Everglades Habitats, Food Chain Mobile, Web of Life, Chaos to Order

Florida Sunshine State Standards:

SC.G.1.1.2



Background

The sun acts like an **engine**, providing the energy for nearly all living things. A **food chain** is a sequence of organisms beginning with green plants (**producers**), which are food for higher and often more complex organisms, animals (**consumers**). Consumers can be divided into three groups. **Herbivores (plant eaters)**, including deer and rabbits are **primary consumers**. **Omnivores (plant and meat eaters)**, including raccoons and opossums, are **secondary consumers**. **Carnivores (meat eaters)** including panthers, bobcats, alligators, and raptors are **tertiary consumers**.

Procedure

1. Have the students make 2" wide green, yellow and red arm bands, taping or gluing the ends together. (For a class of 37, there should be 22 green, 10 yellow, and 5 red arm bands.) Discuss the terms herbivore, carnivore, and omnivore. Have students divide the animal alphabet cards into the appropriate categories. Divide the students into three groups, giving each student an arm band. 5/8's will be herbivores, green arm bands; 2/8's will be omnivores, yellow arm bands; and 1/8 will be carnivores, red arm bands. All students also get a pre-marked baggie.
2. Have the students give you some examples of Everglades food chains. If they need help, some examples of food chains are: seeds, mouse, snake, hawk; sawgrass, deer, panther; fish, heron, alligator; algae, fish, raccoon, bobcat. Or spread out the alphabet cards and have the students put together some food chains.
3. Set boundaries over a large area and randomly spread the poker chips within the playing field. Tell the students the chips are the food (plants) for the herbivores (plant eaters).
4. To start the play, have the herbivores (plant eaters), spread

out across the playing field. Explain to them that when you say, "Go!", they have one minute to fill their stomachs (baggies), as full as they can.

5. After one minute, send the omnivores (meat and plant eaters) out to the playing field to capture (tag) the plant eaters. When the omnivores tag an herbivore, they collect the herbivore's baggie and empty it into their own bag. The herbivore then moves off the playing field to a designated area. Omnivores continue to hunt.

6. After 2 minutes, send the carnivores out on the playing field to capture (tag) any herbivores, omnivores, or other carnivores within the playing area. Once an animal is captured the carnivore collects all food chips from their baggy. Captured animals move off the playing field to the pre-designated waiting area.

7. After 3 - 5 minutes stop the game.

Extension

Have students sit down. Find out how many of each group survived. In order for the herbivores (plant eaters) and omnivores (plant and meat eaters) to survive, they needed to have their baggies filled to the pre-marked line. If you have at least one survivor from each group, you have an unbroken food chain.

Play the game again, first asking students how they might change the game to insure survival of each link in the food chain. If students need help, suggest the following ideas: 1. Change the initial number in each group. 2. Provide a safety zone for the herbivores and omnivores. 3. Reduce the food amount needed for survival by 1/2 or more.

Play the game at least 4 or 5 times. After each game, record how many of which group survived. Put the number on a chart and have the students graph the results. (Make copies of the graph from the Third Grade Activity "Chaos to Order".) Ask the students why they think more of a specific group survived, than others. Ask students if they think this happens in the natural world.

Credits: Adapted from 4-H Curriculum - [Earth Connections](#)



Hawk

Important Words

Engine
Food Chain
Producer
Consumer
Herbivore
Plant Eater
Carnivore
Meat Eater
Omnivore
Primary
Secondary
Tertiary



Yellow Rat Snake

Who Eats What? Food Chain List

Herbivores Plant Eaters	Omnivores Meat and Plant Eaters	Carnivores Meat Eaters
<p> apple snail deer manatee marsh rabbit </p> 	<p> mosquitofish opossum raccoon </p> 	<p> alligator bobcat dolphin garfish egret heron panther snake wood stork </p> 



Engine
(Energy Source)



Producers