Food Chains and Food Webs

Note-taking Guide - Answer Key

Animals, connected, diagram, turtle, humans, disasters, minerals, one, start, hunting, organisms, ducks, food webs, energy, life, transferred, depend, ecosystem, producers, snails, food chain, food, pollution, introduce, numbers

---

Life on Earth exists because of the Sun. Plants, such as grass use the Sun's energy along with water, carbon dioxide, and minerals from the soil, to produce their own food. This is why plants are also known as producers.

Animals cannot make their own food and depend directly or indirectly on plants for their energy. For example, cows get their energy from eating grass directly. Humans get energy from grass indirectly when they eat steak.

A diagram that represents the flow of energy between some organisms in an ecosystem is called a food chain. All food chains start with plants, or producers.

The pond turtle eats the water lily, which gets it energy from the Sun. This forms one food chain. The pond turtle also eats snails that also eat the water lily. This forms another food chain.

When two or more food chains are connected in an ecosystem, we get a food web. Food webs can be simple or complex.

Food webs show us how organisms depend on each other and the ecosystem for food. We can also see that the Sun's energy is transferred from plants to animals.

The snails, fish, and turtles that eat the water lilies would have no food, and eventually they too would not survive.

Natural disasters, such as droughts, forest fires, and floods, can also affect organisms in a food web.

Humans too can affect food webs by activities, such as hunting, habitat destruction, and pollution.

Organisms in a food web are also affected when we introduce a new organism into an ecosystem.

For example, the ducks will also eat the snails and water lilies, reducing their numbers. The turtles and fish will then have less to eat and their numbers may reduce.