



# The Fantastic Food Chain

## Lesson Description

Students are introduced to food origins (example: where does my cheese come from?). They play a game to learn the basic concept of a simple food chain. This lesson is adapted from the Food Chain lesson from Life Lab's [The Growing Classroom](#).

- Time required: 60 minutes
- Location of lesson: Classroom

## Learning Objectives

- Describe the concept of a food chain.
- Explain where the energy begins in a food chain.
- Analyze how one ingredient in a food is linked back to the sun; for example, the cheese in a cheese sandwich (cheese-milk-cow-grass-sun).

## Materials and Preparation

- Index cards or scraps of paper with the following labels (adjust total number to your class size, but keep the ratios roughly the same):
  - 1- Sun
  - 14- Plant
  - 4- Snail
  - 2- Chicken
  - 1- Coyote
-  **Food Chain**
- Prepared vegetable snack of the week – 1 for each student
- Water to drink during the Class Warm-up – water dispenser in the classroom and 1 cup or a water bottle for each student

## Class Warm-up: Champion Cheer and Veggie Taste Test (5-10 minutes)

- Give each student a cup of water or ensure that they have a filled water bottle in front of them.
- Give each student the prepared veggie snack of the day.
- Lead the students in enthusiastically reciting the  **Champion Cheer**.
- At the end of the cheer, drink water and eat the veggie snack together.
- Have students complete their  **Taste Test Observations** about the vegetable snack of the week.

**Review of Last Lesson (2-3 minutes)**

- Review the evaluation questions from last week's lesson. Evaluation questions from all lessons are listed at the end of the workbook .

**Class Discussion (5-10 minutes)**

*All living things depend on energy from food. A food chain is created as one living thing eats another living thing to get food. Every living thing is part of a chain. The chain begins with energy from the sun, which is needed by plants to make their own food. The food chain always begins with the sun and then a plant.*

*Let's think of an example. Name one of your favorite healthy foods. Write a response on the board. What was this before you ate it, plant or animal? Did it need energy to grow? (yes!) Where did the energy come from? Trace examples of the food chain back to a plant and then back to the sun and draw the chain on the board. Everything is linked together in a food chain.*

**Activities (40 minutes)**

-  **"Where Did My Cheese Come From?" (20 minutes):** Working together as a class, students trace the cheese in a cheese sandwich back to the first link in the food chain; the sun.
  1. Refer students to their workbook page  **Food Chains**.
  2. In the first box of the workbook page, have students draw a picture of cheese.
    - a. *Where does cheese come from?* (Answer: milk) In the second box students will draw a picture of milk.
    - b. *Where does milk come from?* (Answer: a cow) Have students draw a cow in the third box.
    - c. *What does a cow eat to get energy?* (Answer: grass) Have the students draw a picture of grass in the fourth box.
    - d. *Where does grass get its energy?* (Answer: the sun) Have the students draw a picture of the sun in the fifth box.
  3. Discuss: *Are you part of a food chain?* (yes!) *Could you live without being part of a food chain?* (no) *Why is it important to understand our need for plants, animals, the sun, water, soil and air?* (so we learn to take care of them)
- **"Food Chain Game" (20 minutes):** Students are given a label so they can group themselves into a food chain.
  1. Pass out one index card label to each student. Tell them to group themselves with the other students who have the same label.

2. Ask the groups to put themselves in order according to who feeds whom. (The correct order is: Sun-Plants-Snails-Chickens-Coyote)
3. After students are in order, have each group, beginning with the sun, say who they are and whom they feed. For example, "I am the sun and I feed the plants." (The coyote at the top of the food chain puts nutrients back in the soil for plants when they die and decompose.)
4. Discuss: *What do all food chains start with? Why? Why are there more snails than chickens? How can the chain be broken?*

**Evaluation Questions (5 minutes)**

1. *What is a food chain?* (Answer: The transfer of energy from one living thing to another living thing)
2. *What do all food chains start with?* (Answer: the sun)
3. *Do all food chains include plants?* (Answer: yes)
4. *How do you trace cheese back to the sun?* (Answer: cheese-milk-cow-grass-sun)
5. *How can a food chain be broken?* (Answer: If one type of living thing in the chain is wiped out; for example, if chickens were to go extinct)
6. *How much water should you drink every day?* (Answer: at least 6 cups of water a day)
7. *How many fruits and vegetables should you eat every day?* (Answer: at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day)
8. *Does gardening connect you to your culture and help you learn new words in your language?* (Answer: yes)

**Preparation for Future Lessons – Reminder for the Instructor**

- Review the materials and preparation needed for the next lesson.
- Remember that an Elder guest instructor is needed for these Spring lessons: lesson 1 (Eating a Rainbow), lesson 4 (Water and Precipitation), and lesson 9 (Plant Parts: Identifying Parts of a Flower).

**Notes**

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