

Food Chains and Energy Flow

READ ALOUD PASSAGE

Most food chains start with plants, because plants capture energy from sunlight. A rabbit eats clover, and a fox eats the rabbit. The clover got its energy from the sun, so the fox is really running on sunlight that has been passed along twice.

About ninety percent of food is burned for energy at each step, so food chains stay short and herbivores usually outnumber carnivores. The rabbit uses most of what it eats just to stay warm, hop around, and keep its body working. Only a small part is left in its body for the fox. That is why a meadow can feed hundreds of rabbits but only a few foxes.

Predators keep herbivores from overgrazing, and their own limits keep them from wiping out their prey. Remove a piece and the balance tips. Energy is not recycled. It enters the living world as sunlight and leaves as low-temperature heat.

Activity 1: Word Hunt

Look back at the reading. Find four nouns and write them on the lines.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Activity 2: Match the Endings

Draw a line from each sentence start to the ending that makes sense.

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|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. There are more rabbits than foxes because | ● | ● A. the meadow stays in balance. |
| 2. There are more rabbits than foxes, but | ● | ● B. energy is lost at each step. |
| 3. There are more rabbits than foxes, so | ● | ● C. the foxes still find food. |

Activity 3: Notes to Sentences

These are notes, not sentences. Turn each set of notes into a complete sentence.

1. clover → sunlight

2. fox → eats rabbit

3. most energy → burned at each step
