

Energy in the Natural World

READ ALOUD PASSAGE

You already know that moving things have kinetic energy and that stored energy is called potential energy. These same ideas help explain how energy moves through the natural world, including through your own body.

Every living thing needs energy to survive. Animals get their energy from food, but where does food get its energy? Plants capture energy from sunlight and use it to grow. That sunlight energy becomes stored, or potential, energy inside the plant's body.

When an animal eats a plant, it takes in that stored energy. Inside the animal's body, the stored energy is released and becomes kinetic energy again: the energy of running, jumping, breathing, and simply staying warm. Animals that eat other animals are getting the same sunlight energy, just passed along one more step. This whole path has a direction. Energy flows from the sun, into plants, into the animals that eat plants, and into the animals that eat those animals.

Along the way, some energy is always given off as heat, which is why your body feels warm. That heat eventually drifts away and is lost into the air, and finally out into space. Because of this, living things cannot reuse the same energy over and over. New energy from the sun has to keep arriving every single day to keep the whole system going.

Activity 1: Word Sort Challenge

Sort the words in the box. Write each word under the right heading.

WORD BANK

heat eats sunlight animal jumping running body plant flows capture

Nouns

Verbs

Activity 2: Fix the Run-On

Each of these is really two sentences squished together. Rewrite it the right way.

1. Every living thing needs energy to survive animals get their energy from food, but where does food get its energy?

Correction:

2. Plants capture energy from sunlight and use it to grow that sunlight energy becomes stored, or potential, energy inside the plant's body.

Correction:

Activity 3: Sentence or Not?

Read each one out loud. Write S if it is a complete sentence. Write F if it is only part of a sentence. Then fix each F so it is a complete sentence.

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1. Every living thing needs energy.

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2. From the sun into plants.

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3. Some energy is lost as heat.

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4. Running, jumping, and breathing.

First fragment, rewritten:

Second fragment, rewritten:
