

Food Web Connections Game

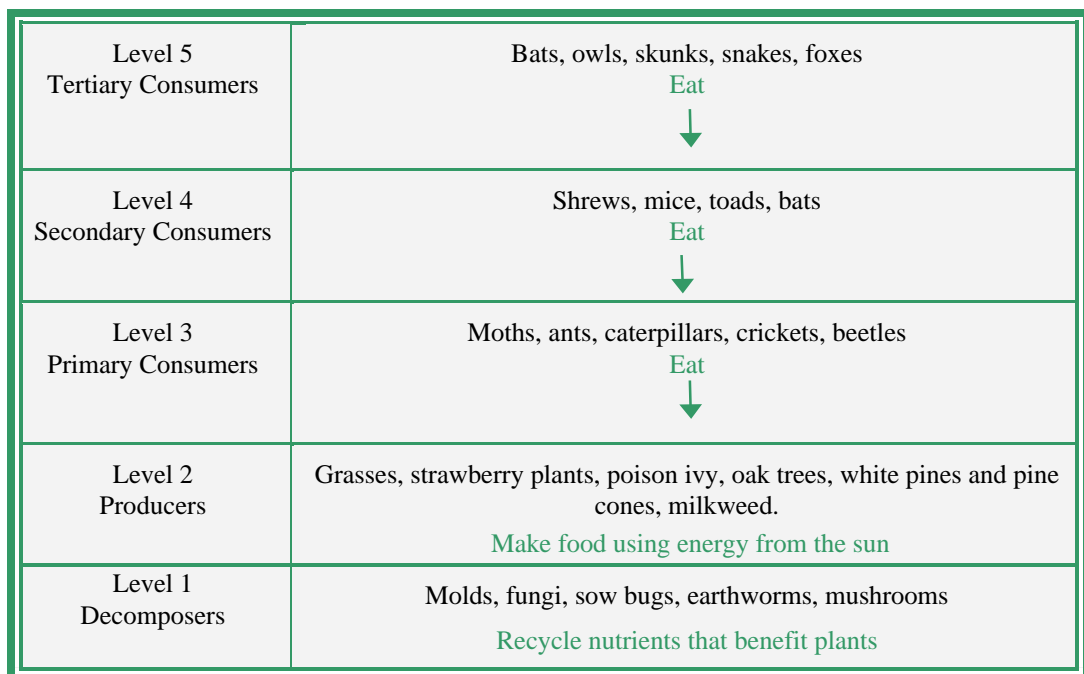
Directions

Goal

The goal of the *Food Web Connections Game* is to create a food web with at least five levels and the greatest number of connections.

Getting Started

- Play the game in groups of four.
- Each player should draw six cards from the food web pile. The remaining food web cards should be mixed in with the Interact! Cards to create a draw pile.
- Make a place for the “discard” pile.
- Arrange your cards into a web of up to five levels starting from the bottom and working your way up. At the bottom, put any decomposers in your hand (molds, fungi, sow bugs, earthworms, mushrooms). They are at the bottom because they recycle nutrients needed by plants to grow. Above the decomposers, on the second level, put any producers (green plants) in your hand (grasses, strawberry plants, poison ivy, oak trees, white pines and pine cones, milkweed). They make their own food using energy from the sun. The next three levels are organized by who eats whom. On the third level, above the green plants, put any primary consumers—those consumers that directly eat green plants (moths, ants, caterpillars, crickets, beetles). In the fourth row, put any secondary consumers—organisms (shrews, mice, toads, bats) that eat primary consumers. Above them in the fifth row, put any tertiary consumers—organisms (bats, owls, skunks, snakes, foxes) that eat secondary consumers. Use the box below as a guide.



- If any of the Food Web cards that you draw do not have a connection to another part of your food web, they must go into the discard pile. For example, if you have an owl card but no mouse or shrew (something the owl can eat) the owl must be put back into the draw pile because it has no place in that web.
- If you don't draw a producer card (plants) at the beginning, there can be no food web, so you lose all your cards. You still draw one card from the pile on each turn. Once you draw a producer, you can start building your food web. Until then, you must return your cards to the discard pile. (*Can you guess why this is part of the game?*)

Playing the Game

1. The player with the lowest number of food web members goes first. If there are two players with the lowest number of cards, the player whose birthday will be coming up next starts. Then the person on their right goes next and so on.
2. Each player in turn draws a card from the mixed pile. If you draw a Food Web card, find a place to attach that card to your food web. If there is no place to attach it (something it really eats), then return it to the pile. Plants are automatically connected (because they make their own food from the sun.) If you draw an Interact! Card, follow the instructions on the card. When you are finished with the Interact! Card, put it in the discard pile.
3. If you lose your producers (plants) during the game, then you lose your entire food web and have to begin again.
4. If you have only one card left on a level of your web and another player takes it, the levels above it go back into the draw pile.
5. If you do not have decomposers, you can still play. (*How is this like what happens in nature and NOT like what happens in nature?*)
6. Play until all the cards in the mixed pile are gone.
7. At the end of the game, the player with the most levels in their web wins. If there is a tie, the tie is broken by who has the most cards in their web. (*In nature, food webs do not actually have to have many levels to survive.*)

Questions to Think About

1. Is it important to have producers in your web? Why?
2. If you had a choice between choosing a card to place on a level where you already have many cards and a level where you only have one card, which should you choose? Why?
3. Is it better to extend your web to higher levels or make sure that you have enough cards at lower levels to support the ones above it? Why?