

Learn with a Craft:

Make a food chain model

What to eat?

Each animal has a certain type of diet that it is specially adapted to eating. Think of a cat's sharp teeth for eating meat, or a caterpillar's jaws for eating plants.

If an animal eats...	it is called a(n)...
plants	herbivore
animals	carnivore
plants & animals	omnivore
dead plants and animals	decomposer

The suffix *-vore* comes from the Latin root word *vorare*, which means "to devour"

In the Hanford Reach, there are herbivores, carnivores, omnivores, and decomposers. See the following page for examples.

Make connections

How do all these types of animals connect to each other? They get energy from eating plants and eating other animals. Let's follow this flow of energy by making a model of a food chain.

Have you ever made a paper chain? You can glue or tape strips of paper into links, adding one at a time. Cut along the lines on the following page to make strips, and link them together according to what they eat. You can also make your own links with any living thing you choose. Do some research to discover its connections.

Every food chain starts with the sun. But what eats sunlight? Plants are called **producers** because they can produce their own energy (food) out of sunlight. Link a producer to the sun.

Next find an **herbivore** and link it to the producer.

Link a **carnivore** to any smaller animal, including insects.

Link an **omnivore** to a plant or a smaller animal.

Link a **decomposer** to any plant or animal. Decomposers break down dead plants and animals into soil, so if you like you can link the decomposer back to a plant, making a circle. You just made a model of a food chain!

Many food chains may be linked together to create a food web. A food web shows many more connections among the living things in a community.

Cut out these strips to make a food chain model.

Sun
Sagebrush <i>producer</i>
Bunch grasses <i>producer</i>
Balsamroot <i>producer</i>
Jackrabbit <i>herbivore</i>
Mule deer <i>herbivore</i>
Grasshopper <i>herbivore</i>
Coyote <i>omnivore</i>
Skunk <i>omnivore</i>
Great Blue Heron <i>carnivore</i>
Mountain Lion <i>carnivore</i>
Gopher snake <i>carnivore</i>
Darkling beetle <i>decomposer</i>
Soil bacteria <i>decomposer</i>