



Food Chains! Year 4 Science at Home

You can help! Your child is learning about how energy flows through nature using food chains. The landscape around you is full of living examples!

Why are we learning this? Food chains on Country

The land and waters up here are full of living things that depend on each other. Grasses and plants feed grasshoppers, which feed lizards, which feed hawks and eagles. Fish eat insects, barramundi eat smaller fish, and crocodiles eat barramundi. First Nations peoples have always understood these connections — knowing that if you remove too many of one animal or plant, the whole system is affected. This is why caring for Country matters: disrupting one part of a food chain can have effects all the way up and down.

My child will learn to:

✓ Know about producers and consumers

Understand that plants make food from sunlight (producers) and animals eat food (consumers).

✓ Build a food chain

Write or draw a food chain showing who eats who.

✓ Understand decomposers

Know that decomposers break down dead material and return nutrients to the soil.

✓ Predict effects

Think about what happens to a food chain when one part is removed.

Big ideas to know:

Producers

Plants and algae are producers — they make their own food from sunlight through photosynthesis. They are always at the START of a food chain.

Consumers

Animals eat other living things. Herbivores (plant-eaters), carnivores (meat-eaters) and omnivores (eat both) are all consumers. They are further along the food chain.

Decomposers

Decomposers like worms, beetles, fungi and bacteria break down dead plants and animals. They return nutrients to the soil so that plants can grow again.

Food Chains — Who eats who?

Year 4 Biology





Food Chains! Year 4 Science at Home

Types of living things in a food chain

Role	What it does	Examples in the north
Producer	Makes own food from sunlight — ALWAYS at the start	Grasses, water lilies, mangrove trees, algae
Herbivore (consumer)	Eats only plants	Wallaby, caterpillar, grasshopper, dugong
Carnivore (consumer)	Eats only animals	Crocodile, hawk, barramundi, blue-tongue lizard
Omnivore (consumer)	Eats plants and animals	Turtle, possum, many birds, most humans!
Decomposer	Breaks down dead material	Worms, beetles, fungi, bacteria in the soil

Think Like a Scientist — Build a Food Chain

Think of 4 living things you know from around here. Can you arrange them into a food chain? Start with a plant. Who eats it? Who eats that animal? Keep going!

Ask: "What would happen if the grasshoppers disappeared from this chain? How would that affect the lizard? What about the hawk?" Think about the whole chain!

Local Top End food chains to try:

1. Grass - Grasshopper - Lizard - Hawk
2. Water lily - Turtle - Crocodile
3. Algae - Small fish - Barramundi - Crocodile
4. Leaves - Caterpillar - Bird - Snake
5. Make up your own using animals you know!

Questions to ask your child

1. What does that animal eat? Is it a producer, herbivore, carnivore or omnivore?
2. Can you draw a food chain starting with a plant from outside?
3. What would happen if all the grasshoppers disappeared?
4. What do decomposers do? Why are they important?

5. Can an animal be in more than one food chain? Why do you think so?
6. Why do food chains always start with a plant or algae?
7. What would a crocodile food chain look like up here?

Look outside and ask: "What is eating what?" This is real ecology — the science of living things and how they interact. Food chains are everywhere!

Key words to know:

Food chain	A sequence showing who eats who, starting with a plant (producer)
Producer	A living thing that makes its own food from sunlight — plants and algae
Consumer	A living thing that eats other living things — all animals are consumers
Herbivore	An animal that only eats plants
Carnivore	An animal that only eats other animals
Decomposer	A living thing that breaks down dead plants and animals — worms, fungi, bacteria
Habitat	The natural environment where a plant or animal lives

Key words to look up

Food chain · Producer · Consumer ·
Herbivore · Carnivore · Decomposer · Habitat

What school will check

Your child needs to explain the roles of producers, consumers and decomposers in a habitat and construct food chains that show feeding relationships.

Try it at home!

Go outside and look at a plant. Ask: what might eat this plant? What might eat that animal? Keep going as long as you can — you've built a real food chain!