

Food Chain Fact File

What are food chains?

All plants and animals need energy from their food to live. A food chain shows this transfer of energy. Within an ecosystem, there are many food chains interlinked to create a food web. These webs show the interconnection between species within an ecosystem.

- A food chain always starts with the **sun**, as the source of energy for the producers
- Plants are **producers**, as they produce their own energy from the sun
- **Primary consumers** are animals that eat producers (plants)
- **Secondary consumers** are animals that get their energy by eating other animals
- **Tertiary consumers** eat secondary consumers
- Further up the food chain are **predators**
- At the top of food webs are **apex predators** who have few natural threats

Other key terms:

Herbivores are animals that only eat plants

Carnivores are animals that only eat other animals

Omnivores eat both plants and animals

Scavengers eat anything, including dead animals



Thorny seahorse
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Why is biodiversity important?

Biodiversity means 'variety of life,' and can be measured as the number of different living things in an area, and the quantities of each.

Biodiversity is vital for ecosystem health. All living things play an important role in their environments. Most organisms are dependent on, or at least affected by, each other. The interconnections between creatures creates a complex web of who eats who.