

Nova's Guide to the Circle of Life: Food Chains

Follow the energy: From the sun to the top of the food chain!

- A producer is a living thing, usually a plant, that makes its own food using sunlight. Without producers, there would be no energy for the rest of the chain.
- A herbivore is an animal that only eats plants. They are primary consumers because they get their energy directly from producers.
- A predator is an animal that hunts and eats other animals, which are known as its prey. Predators help keep the population of other animals in balance.
- An omnivore is a creature that eats both plants and animals. Because they have a varied diet, they can survive in many different environments.
- Energy flows through a food chain in one direction. The arrows in a food chain diagram always point towards the animal that is doing the eating, showing where the energy is going.

Did you know? Did you know? Every food chain starts with energy from the sun! Plants use this sunlight to create their own food through photosynthesis. This makes them the ultimate 'producers' that provide the fuel for every other creature in the chain.

Key vocabulary: Producer · Consumer · Herbivore · Carnivore · Omnivore · Predator · Prey · Ecosystem