

Food Chains: Aisha and the Energy Relay

Read the story aloud together, then try the activities.

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

During the holidays, Aisha stayed at her Nani's farm. One morning Nani handed her a notebook. "Today we're going on a hunt," she said, "for the Sun's energy. It's hiding inside everything that lives here. Watch where it goes." Aisha laughed. "How can you watch energy?" "Like a relay race," said Nani. "Watch who passes it on."

They began at the edge of the field, where the grass shone in the morning sunshine. "The grass is the first runner," said Nani. "Its leaves catch sunlight and use it to make food out of air and water. Plants make their own food, so we call them producers. Every food chain starts with one." Aisha wrote: 1. Grass — producer. Gets energy from the Sun.

Something sprang out of the grass. "A grasshopper!" It was munching a blade of grass. "The grasshopper can't make its own food," said Nani, "so it eats the grass, and the energy passes to it. Animals that eat other living things are consumers. An animal that eats only plants is a herbivore." Aisha drew an arrow: grass -> grasshopper.

By the pond, a frog shot out its long tongue — and the grasshopper was gone. "Energy passed on again," said Nani. "The frog is a carnivore, a meat-eater." Later, near the stone wall, they saw a snake slide towards the pond. "Snakes eat frogs," said Nani. And high in the sky, a big bird was circling. "A snake eagle," Nani whispered. "It hunts snakes. Nothing here hunts the eagle — it's at the top of this chain."

Aisha looked at her notebook: grass -> grasshopper -> frog -> snake -> snake eagle. "Why do the arrows point that way?" she asked. "Each arrow shows where the energy goes," said Nani. "From the food to the one who eats it. And at every step, most of the energy gets used up for living, moving and keeping warm — only a small part is passed on. That's why there's lots of grass, fewer frogs, and only one eagle."

On the way home, they found a fallen log covered in mushrooms, with earthworms wriggling underneath. "Who's this?" asked Aisha. "The clean-up team," said Nani. "When plants and animals die, decomposers — fungi like these mushrooms, and tiny bacteria too small to see, with help from earthworms — break them down. The goodness goes back into the soil, and the grass uses it to grow." Aisha drew one more arrow, from the bottom of her chain all the way back to the start. "It's not just a chain," she said. "It's a circle."

1. Match each word to its meaning

Write the letter next to each word.

1. Food chain _____

2. Producer _____

3. Consumer _____

4. Herbivore _____

5. Carnivore _____

6. Decomposer _____

A. an animal that gets energy by eating plants or other animals.

B. an animal that eats only plants.

C. an animal that eats other animals.

D. a living thing, such as a fungus or bacteria, that breaks down dead plants and animals.

E. a list, joined by arrows, that shows how energy passes from one living thing to another.

F. a plant that makes its own food using sunlight.

2. Number Aisha's food chain in order (1-5).

[] Grasshopper

[] Frog

[] Snake

[] Snake eagle

[] Grass

3. Answer the questions

1. Why is the grass called a producer?

2. Is the grasshopper a herbivore or a carnivore?

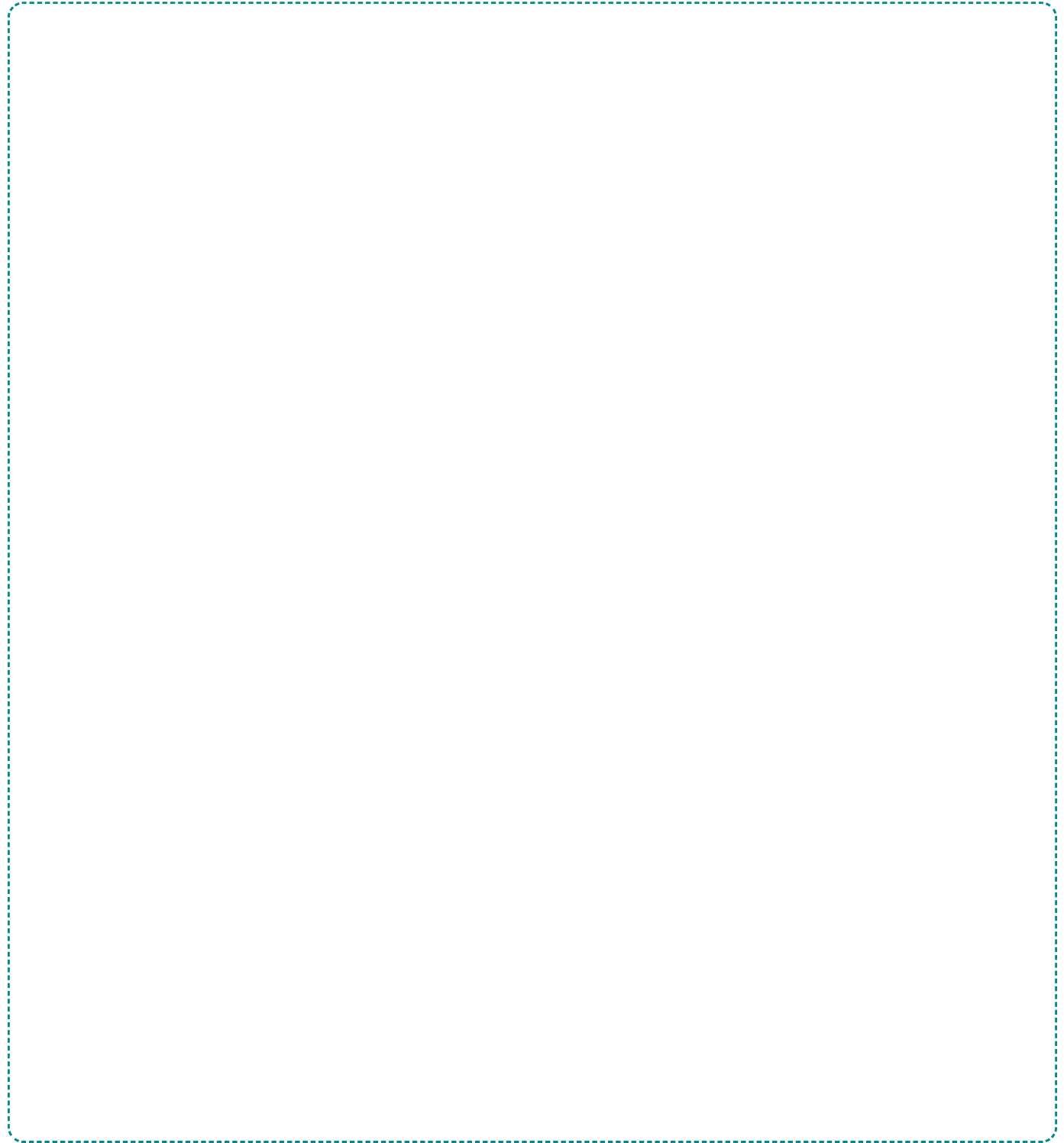
3. Which way do the arrows point in a food chain, and why?

4. Why is there lots of grass but only one snake eagle?

5. What do decomposers do?

4. Draw and label

Draw the food chain with arrows: grass -> grasshopper -> frog -> snake -> snake eagle. Label the producer and the consumers.

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed teal border, intended for a child to draw a food chain. The box is oriented vertically and occupies most of the page below the instructions.

Answer key (for teachers and parents)

On its own page so you can leave it out when printing for children.

1. 1-E 2-F 3-A 4-B 5-C 6-D

2. 1. Grass 2. Grasshopper 3. Frog 4. Snake 5. Snake eagle

3.1 It makes its own food using sunlight, air and water.

3.2 A herbivore — it eats only plants.

3.3 From the food to the eater, because they show where the energy goes.

3.4 Most of the energy is used up at each step, so only a little is passed on to the next animal.

3.5 They break down dead plants and animals and put the goodness back into the soil.