

WORKSHEET-

Web of life



This activity encourages students to think about a natural eco-system, how the elements in it interact and the interconnectedness of everything in the natural world. It demonstrates the consequences of human actions on the biodiversity of an eco-system

Resources:

- One ball of string or wool (at least 20m)
- Approximately 15 labels, each with the name of an organism or element in an eco-system. Here is an example list from a woodland river ecosystem - rain, river, oak tree, soil, fish, frog, heron, otter, spider, fly, beetle, bat, Bluebell, bee, squirrel.
- For a smaller group, leave out the ones at the end of the list. For a larger group add a few extra species such as bramble, mouse and owl. etc.

Step-By-Step Procedures:

- Each student is given a label to stick on the front of their jumper.
- Each group is given a fairly large ball of string/wool.
- One student (e.g. the squirrel) holds the end of the string, then hands the ball to another student (e.g. the oak tree), while making a statement about the relationship between the two things on the stickers (e.g. the squirrel eats acorns from the oak tree). Now, the "squirrel" is holding the end of the string, and the "oak-tree" is holding the ball.
- Next, the oak-tree passes the ball to a third child, again making a statement, but holding on to the string (e.g. the oak tree needs water from the rain in order to grow). Now two children are holding onto the string at different places and the third is holding the ball.
- The activity continues like this, with the ball being passed back and forth, but each child holding onto the string. Every time the string is passed the child passing it must make a statement.
- Some elements, such as the river and the rain in the above example, will have multiple connections to other elements. In this case, a child may be holding the string in 3 or 4 different places.
- Soon a web of string will have been created.



Note *It's important that everyone holds the web taut*

You can demonstrate how strong the web is by pushing the middle of it gently.

To demonstrate how the web can be disrupted, you can remove one of the key elements from the web.

Examples: The river has been polluted; the oak tree has been cut down.

Then the child with that sticker lets go of all the bits of string he or she is holding. The web is no longer resilient, but weak and the threads are loose. You can also ask the children to make statements about the consequences of these elements being removed (e.g. without the river. the frogs will disappear from the forest. without the oak trees, there will be no leaf-litter so the soil will not be as rich and the bluebells won't grow etc.) so more and more of the elements are disconnected from each other and the web is weaker and weaker.

Developed by:

