

# FOOD CHAIN GAME

*An interactive, fast-paced game to learn about connections in the food chain*

## Materials:

- Laminated character cards (producer, herbivore, carnivore, decomposer)
- Popsicle sticks
- Clothes pins

## Instructions:

- Describe the roles of producers, herbivores, carnivores and decomposers in the food chain. Producers are plants that produce their own food using energy from the sun through a process called photosynthesis. Consumers cannot make their own food so they need to eat producers (these consumers are called herbivores) or other consumers (these consumers are called carnivores). Decomposers are fungi and bacteria that break down organic material such as dead producers, herbivores and carnivores.
- In most ecosystems there are far more producers than herbivores and far more herbivores than carnivores.
- Explain that the teacher will play the role of sun, which gives energy to the producers so they can grow.
- Hand out one character card to each student along with a clothespin, which can be used to attach the card to their clothing.
- Hand out one popsicle stick to each student to represent one life.
- Establish boundaries for the game (roughly half a soccer field).
- Everyone spreads out evenly on the field to start the game.
- Establish with the students a signal that means the game is over.

## Goals of the game:

- Herbivores chase producers and try to tag them.
- Carnivores chase herbivores and try to tag them.
- Decomposers can tag everyone... their role is to turn everyone else back into soil!
- (Suggestion: Start with only producers, herbivores, carnivores in the first round and then introduce decomposers in the second round.)

## Rules:

- If an herbivore tags a producer, the producer must give their popsicle stick to the herbivore. The herbivore must find the teacher (representing the sun) and they can receive another popsicle stick.
- If a carnivore tags an herbivore, the herbivore must give ONE popsicle stick to the carnivore.
- If a decomposer tags a producer, herbivore or carnivore, they receive ALL of their popsicle sticks return them to the sun. This means they have turned the plant or animal back into soil.

## End of game:

- Ask the students if they survived: How many popsicle sticks do you have left in your hand?
- Explain that in order to survive:
  - producers need one popsicle stick
  - herbivores need two popsicle sticks
  - carnivores need three popsicle sticks
- If students did not have enough food, they were not able to survive the round.

## Follow up questions:

- If you were a producer, how did you avoid being caught by the herbivores?
- If you were a herbivore, how did you avoid being caught by the carnivores?
- Was it easier or more difficult for you in the second round when decomposers were introduced?
- If humans were introduced into the game, what role would they play in the food chain?

*This game has been adapted from an activity available on the CPAWS Southern Alberta website at: [https://cpaws-southernalberta.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Animal\\_Game.pdf](https://cpaws-southernalberta.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Animal_Game.pdf)*



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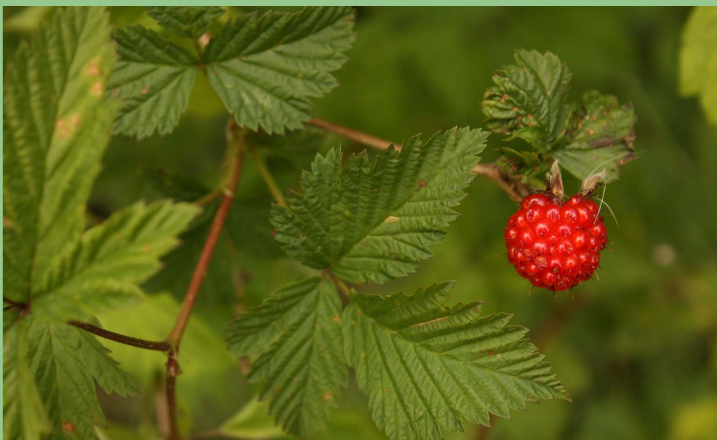
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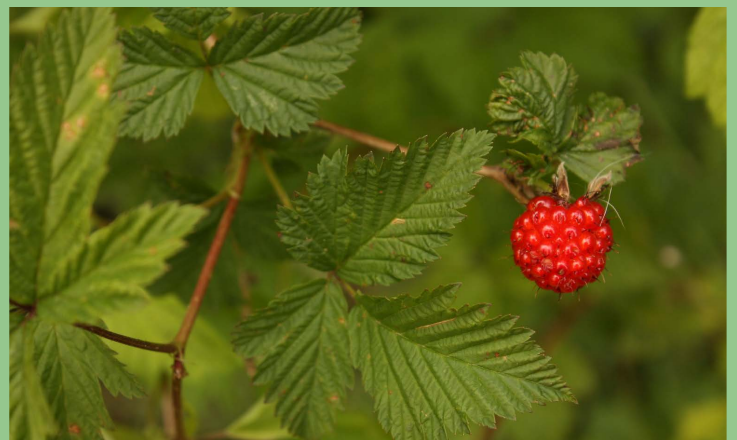
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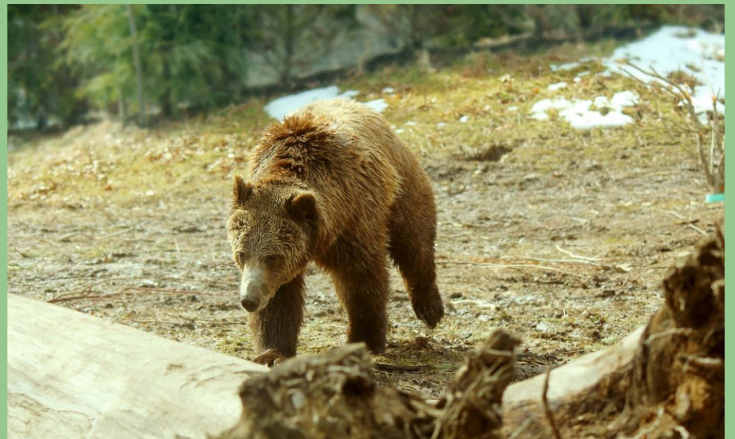
**CARNIVORE**



**CARNIVORE**



**CARNIVORE**



**CARNIVORE**



**HERBIVORE**



**HERBIVORE**



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