



Web of Life

Science – Grade 4-6

Students analyze how organisms are linked to one another in the environment by building a classroom-sized web from a ball of yarn.

Materials:

- Ball of yarn
- Large playing area

Instructions:

Students create a web in this activity to show the relationship of plants and animals in an ecosystem. This web does not only represent a food web, but shows the various kinds of relationships found in an ecosystem. Some plants might provide shelter for animals, some might provide food, and some animals might pollinate the food, and so it goes that all things are connected. The web of life created here suggests that all living things are connected to all others. No matter how unrelated the organisms may seem, they are, in fact, connected.

1. Review the term biodiversity with students. By breaking down the word, bio= prefix meaning life, and diversity= variety (a lot of plants and animals), students have a better understanding of the word. Ask students why it's important to have biodiversity on earth. Why shouldn't we get rid of some of the unpleasant things in the environment?
2. Have students stand in a circle. Tell each student to think of an animal or plant.
3. The teacher begins by sharing the name of a certain plant or animal.
4. After naming the animal, the teacher holds on to the end of the yarn and tosses the ball of yarn to someone else in the circle.
5. The student who caught the ball of yarn should name another animal or plant. They should hold the string and toss the ball of yarn to another student. This continues until all students are holding a piece of the yarn. A web of yarn will be created.
6. When all the students are holding a piece of yarn, ask each student to repeat the name of the plant or animal of their choice.
7. Tell students as a group that they will be playing "Mother Nature" and must decide what plant or animal is unimportant and should be done away with. Hold



a vote. When it is decided who shall be the unfortunate victim, tell that student to let go of the yarn. When others feel the tightness of the yarn leaving their hands, they should let go of their piece. All of the yarn will eventually fall to the ground.

8. Talk about how things are all connected.

** Lesson Enhancement: Have students create a tower of blocks representing animals. Label each block with the name of an animal and start taking blocks away to show that the tower will tumble.

** Lesson Enhancement: Have students write a story or essay telling the importance of biodiversity.