

**LESSON: Prairie Food Cupboard GRADE: 2nd TIME: 45 min.****SUMMARY:**

The once abstract concept of food chains comes to life for learners to witness and observe firsthand in the prairie. During a teacher-led discussion, students define food chain. The field leader has a few students pretend play that they are the sun, plant and insect and has them act out a food chain for the rest of the class. Next, students make predictions about possible food chains they may find in the prairie. Following, students split up into small groups with field leaders and dig in the soil, search through plants, and watch the sky to develop simple food chains based on their observations. Students reflect by comparing their predictions to their findings about food chains on the prairie.

OBJECTIVES: Iowa Core**Science****Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, Dynamics**

- **2-LS2-1** Plan and conduct an investigation to determine if plants need sunlight and water to grow.

Literacy**Speaking and Listening**

- **SL.2.1.** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- **SL.2.4.** Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
- **SL.2.6.** Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

Writing

- **W.2.8.** Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.



MATERIALS & RESOURCES:

- White board & Dry erase marker
- Data sheets with clipboards or nature journals
- Example of journal entry (last page of this lesson)
- Pencils and Colored pencils

PRESENTATION:

Explain to students that today, they will be learning about a food chain. Explain that one way naturalists describe the way animals and plants interact is by using a food chain. Write the words “food chain” on the white board and have the students read the word with you to practice pronunciation.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Gauge students background knowledge by asking if students have ever heard of the word “food chain”. If any of the students are able to describe a food chain, call on them. If after 3 tries, no one is able to come up with a proper definition it means the students do not have it as stored knowledge. Go ahead and tell them the definition.
2. Explain that the word food chain describes who eats what in nature. Provide them with several examples of how animals consume animals and/or plants. Ask students if they have ever seen a robin eating a worm? That’s a food chain! Ask if they have ever seen a ladybug eating a plant? That’s a food chain! Ask them if they have ever seen a buffalo eating grass? That’s a food chain!
3. Tell students that all food chains start with the sun. Ask students what uses the sun to make food? Plants! Yes! Draw a sun on the board, then an arrow, and then a plant. Ask what type of prairie animal would eat a plant? Then draw whatever animal example that they give you.
4. Tell them that now they will be naturalists and be able to record food chains outside. Pass out data sheets, pencils, and clip-boards. Put students into groups of about four with an adult chaperone.



5. Provide an example of a completed data sheet on the board and review how students should complete their data sheet or have students create the data sheet in their journals.
6. Prepare students to go outside by reviewing with them how naturalists behave- calm and quiet, respectful, happy, fun, curious, asking questions, observant. Tell students that while they are outside you want them to be thinking in the back of their minds, “Why are food chains important?” “Why do we need to study this?”
7. Once outside, have each group with their adult chaperone go to a specific area and search for examples of food chains. Rotate among groups ask questions such as, “Where are these plants getting their food from?” “What type of insects are you finding?” “Are all the insects eating the same thing?” “Could they possibly eat one another?” “What animal would eat these insects?” Make sure students are filling out their data sheets.
8. After about 10 minutes, ask students and adult chaperones to come together and head back into the PLC. Instruct students that while they are walking to go back inside, they should think about the discoveries they made and get ready to share them with the other naturalists.
9. Once inside, walk around and remark on students completed data sheets. Ask students to describe examples of food chains they found outside.
10. Ask students if any of them were able to think about why studying food chains is important to the prairie. Why should we notice or care about food chains? Well, first of all, humans are part of the food chain! Secondly, it means that everything is connected. If we just pull one plant or one animal away from an ecosystem, we have to think about how it might affect the rest of the prairie!
11. Tell students that if they enjoyed looking for food chains here, then they should try it at home! Animals and plants are interacting with each other everywhere, and they should notice food chains anytime they are outside- spiders catching insects, insects chewing on leaves, butterflies sucking down nectar, etc.



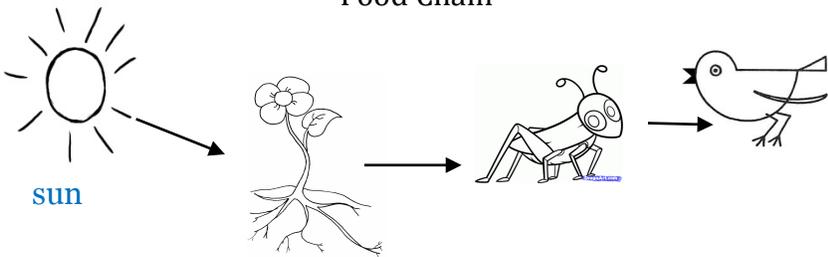
REFLECTION/JOURNAL PROMPT:

Date. Time. Location. Weather

Prairie Food Chain

Best Plant	Best Animal
	
My plant was short. It had one leaf. It was yellow.	I found a grasshopper. It was green and had six legs.

Food Chain



sun yellow plant grasshopper Brown bird