

The Food Chain & Animal Eating Habits

All living things need what we call **necessities** in order to live. A necessity is something that is important to survival. Food, water, and shelter are common necessities. It is also important for many living things to have sunlight. Animals need food to live. This means they are depending on either plants or animals which are their main sources of food.

Animals can be grouped by what they eat. The animals are divided into three main groups:

Herbivores – Animals that only eat plants

Carnivores – Animals that only eat other animals

Omnivores – Animals that eat plants and animals

Here are some examples of animals that fit into each group:

Herbivores – Cows, Horses, and Sheep

Carnivores – Lions, Wolves, Tigers

Omnivores – Humans, Bears, Birds

The Food Chain

The food chain involves every creature in nature from humans down to the smallest animals and fish. The food chain shows how every animal is connected. Without a food chain other animals and even humans would die. This is because the food chain states the smallest of creatures feed off plants. Middle sized animals feed off the smaller animals. Humans and other more powerful animals feed off of the middle sized creatures, and the chain continues until every animal has something to eat.

There are many ways to see the food chain in action. In the sea, a small fish might eat plankton to live. These small fish will be eaten by a tuna or some other form of larger fish and then the tuna will be eaten by a shark.

The shark is then eaten by us humans! This is why you might have heard we are at the top of the food chain.

Plankton → Small Fish → Tuna → Shark → Humans

On land an herbivore is going to eat grass. This animal will be eaten by a larger, meat eating animal such as an omnivore or a carnivore. Eventually a larger species will eat the smaller and the cycle of the food chain will continue.

Animal Eating Habits

As you may have realized not all animals are going to eat the same things. This is just like human beings. Often each member of a family will have a different favorite food.

Herbivores, or grass eaters, have a combination of sharp teeth and flat back teeth. A cow is one example of an herbivore.

Carnivores, or meat eaters, have very sharp teeth which help them to tear the food they will eat. However, like herbivores their back teeth are flat and help to chew their food well. A lion is an example of a carnivore.

Some living things such as snakes have to eat differently than other carnivores. Snakes, lizards, and frogs do eat meat but they do not have teeth. Since snakes cannot chew their food they swallow their food in one whole piece and digest it just like that.

Omnivores eat both meat and plants. Humans are omnivores. Look at your teeth in the mirror. Feel the sharpness of each tooth by running your fingertip over your teeth. You will find that omnivores have both flat back teeth to help chew and sharp teeth to help tear up meat.

The sharpness of the teeth of each animal depends on what kind of food they eat. A lion is going to have much sharper, more powerful teeth than both humans and cows. A cow will have teeth more suited for chewing grass and cud.

The Food Chain & Animal Eating Habits Worksheet

1. A tiger is what type of animal?

- A. Carnivore
- B. Herbivore
- C. Omnivore
- D. Dinosaur

2. Omnivores eat what kinds of food?

- A. Steak
- B. Carrot Sticks
- C. Plants and Animals
- D. Animals

3. What is the food chain?


- A. The relationship an animal has with everything around them
- B. A Grocery Store
- C. A group of bigger animals that eat smaller ones
- D. None of the above

4. What animal chews cud?

- A. Ducks
- B. Monkeys
- C. Cows
- D. Snakes

5. How do snakes eat their food?

- A. With a knife and fork
- B. In tiny pieces
- C. By swallowing it whole
- D. Through a straw

Name _____ Instructor  WEB Date _____

Answer Key

1. A
2. C
3. A
4. C
5. C