

## The Web of Life Game

1. As a class discuss what is an ecosystem. The teacher will choose an ecosystem such as a Forest, under the Sea, Africa or a natural area near the school.

2. Pupils will create a list of living things that exist in the chosen ecosystem. (If the teacher chooses a forest, for example, pupils may not include a lion or a palm tree.) The teacher should keep the list in front of the class. Make sure the list includes various types of herbivores and carnivores, plants, as well as things like fresh water, salt water, rain and sunlight. There should be at least as many items on the list as there are pupils in the class.

3. Assign each pupil one item from the list of organisms living in the chosen ecosystem. Make sure to assign water and the sun to pupils. Make certain to assign both plants and animals as well as herbivores and carnivores. Do not assign two pupils the same thing.

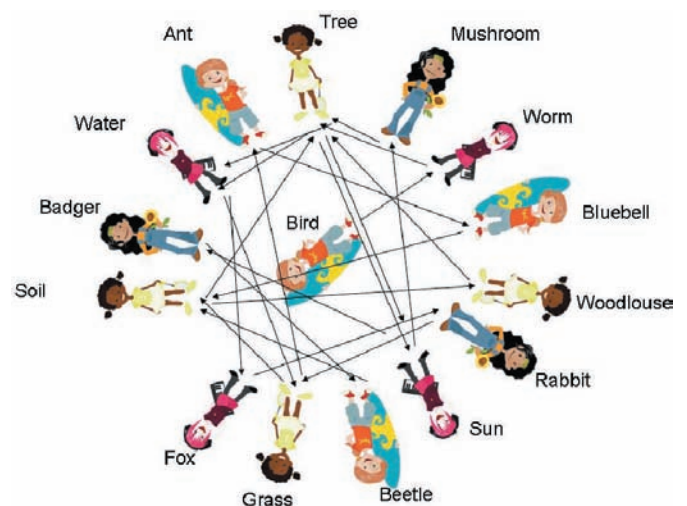
4. Pupils will have a few minutes to write their assigned organism on a piece of blank paper. Pupils can also draw a picture of their assigned item from the ecosystem.

5. Next have the pupils stand in a circle in the middle of the classroom. Choose one pupil to stand in the middle of the circle (it does not matter who). Give that pupil the ball of string/wool and have the pupil name the organism he or she is and the name of an organism he or she depends on for survival. For example, a bird may depend on a worm or fresh water, while corn might depend on the sun or healthy topsoil and topsoil may depend on clean water and fertilizer. The pupil then tosses the ball of string/wool to that organism, holding on to the end of the string. Repeat the process until each pupil is holding a piece of the string/wool.

Once the string/wool comes to either water or the sun, the pupil playing that part should then toss the string/wool to an organism he or she supports. It is okay if a pupil gets the ball of string/wool more than once.

6. Once each pupil has a piece of string/wool, the teacher then states a man-made change in the environment, such as global warming or deforestation. Any pupil (playing in the role of their assigned organism) potentially overcome by that change drops the piece of string/wool and exits the circle or sits down. Any organism relying on the affected organism will also be influenced and should drop the string. Eventually nearly all organisms are affected. The pupils will see the results of a small change in the food chain. Will this scenario also affect the sun and/or water?

7. This process is repeated as many times as necessary using different scenarios so that only the sun is still holding the string/wool (water may also still be holding the string/wool, depending on how severe you decide to make the climate change process). How are humans and, more specifically, individuals affected?



### DISCUSSION:

What happens when an ecosystem is drastically altered? How can the interconnections of living things ensure survival and also put organisms at risk? How does human activity positively and negatively affect the food chain/the web of life? What can human beings do to prevent the extinction of organisms? What natural resources are most important for a species' survival? Why should we care whether other species survive or not? How are humans and, more specifically, individuals affected?

in association with:



Humberside Engineering Training Association

