SCIENCE

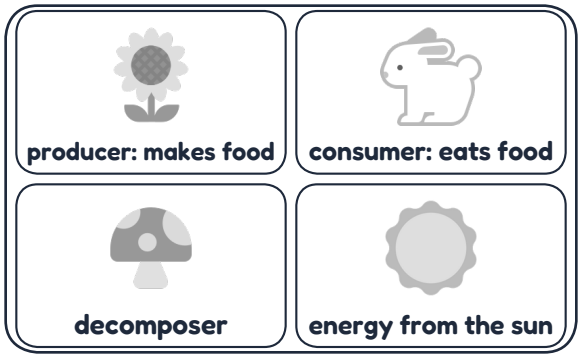
Producers, consumers and decomposers

Name _____ Date _____

I can sort living things into producers, consumers and decomposers.

1 How it works

Every living thing needs energy. Producers, like grass and trees, make their own food from sunlight. Consumers, like rabbits, owls and people, get energy by eating plants or other animals. Decomposers, like mushrooms and worms, break down dead plants and animals and return their nutrients to the soil.



2 Producer, consumer or decomposer?

Use the words in the box.

producer **consumer** **decomposer**



grass
It makes food from sunlight.

_____



oak tree
It makes food in its leaves.

_____



mushroom
It breaks down a dead log.

_____



earthworm
It eats dead leaves in the soil.

_____



rabbit
It eats grass and clover.

_____



owl
It hunts mice at night.

_____

How did I do? ☆ ☆ ☆

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Who eats what?

Name _____ Date _____

I can tell what an animal eats.

1 What does it eat? Circle one.



A rabbit eats grass and carrots. plants animals both



A lion hunts zebras. plants animals both



A fox eats mice and berries. plants animals both



A goat eats leaves and grass. plants animals both



A shark eats fish and seals. plants animals both

2 Fill in the blanks

Use the words in the box.

sun | decomposer | producer | consumer

1. A _____ makes its own food.
2. A _____ eats other living things.
3. A _____ breaks down dead things.
4. Plants use energy from the _____.

How did I do? ☆ ☆ ☆

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Think like a scientist

Name _____ Date _____

I can explain how producers, consumers and decomposers depend on each other.

1 Think about it

1. Why do all animals need plants? _____
2. What would happen with no decomposers? _____
3. Are you a producer or a consumer? _____
4. Where does a plant get its energy? _____

2 True or false? Circle it.

1. People are consumers.	true	false
2. Decomposers make food from sunlight.	true	false
3. Plants make their own food.	true	false
4. Mushrooms are decomposers.	true	false
5. A rabbit is a producer.	true	false

3 Draw a producer, a consumer and a decomposer that live in a forest. Label each one.

How did I do? ☆ ☆ ☆

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Try it: the schoolyard survey

Name _____ Date _____

I can find and sort the living things in one small patch of ground.

1 You need

-  a hoop or a loop of string
-  a magnifying glass
-  a clipboard and a pencil
-  a grassy spot
-  a partner

2 What to do

1. Lay the hoop on the grass. Your survey is only what is inside it.
2. Look closely with the magnifying glass. List every living thing you see.
3. Sort each one: producer, consumer or decomposer.
4. Count how many of each kind you found.

3 I predict

Will you find more producers or more consumers?

_____

_____

4 What I see

Living thing	Producer, consumer or decomposer?	How many?
1		
2		
3		
4		

How did I do? ☆ ☆ ☆

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FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Answer key: producers, consumers and decomposers

1 Page 1

Answers: 1) grass: producer; 2) oak tree: producer; 3) mushroom: decomposer; 4) earthworm: decomposer; 5) rabbit: consumer; 6) owl: consumer.

2 Page 2

Eats: 1) plants (herbivore); 2) animals (carnivore); 3) both (omnivore); 4) plants (herbivore); 5) animals (carnivore).

Blanks: 1) producer; 2) consumer; 3) decomposer; 4) sun.

3 Page 3

Think: 1) Every food chain starts with a plant; 2) Dead things would pile up; 3) A consumer; 4) From sunlight.

True or false: 1) true; 2) false; 3) true; 4) true; 5) false.

Drawing: answers will vary, for example a tree, a deer and a mushroom, each labeled.

4 Page 4: Try it!

Most children find far more producers (grass, clover and weeds) than consumers (ants, beetles, spiders and worms). That is true in every ecosystem: there must be many more plants than animals, because the animals depend on the plants for food. A worm or a patch of mold counts as a decomposer.

5 Teaching tip

Start with lunch. Ask children where each food came from until they reach a plant: cheese comes from a cow, and the cow ate grass. Every chain leads back to a producer.

Safety: look but do not touch bugs or mushrooms, and wash your hands afterward.