

# MUTUAL of OMAHA'S WILD KINGDOM

## Food-Chain Paper-Chain

### Objective

To teach students about food chains and to reinforce information learned in each *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* episode.

### Grades

K—3

### Materials

- construction paper (earth tone colors), cut into 2" x 8" strips
- index cards
- markers
- pipe cleaners
- stapler, tape and single-hole punch

### Explanation

1. Begin by explaining the term "food chain" in simple terms to the class. Use the following script if you like:

*A food chain is all about energy.*

*Where do you get your energy from each day?*

*You get your energy from your breakfast! (and later from your lunch and dinner)*

*What did you eat for breakfast today?*

*Let's see if we can make a food chain for some of those things.*

*Bacon:*

*Sun – vegetables – pig – human*

*Egg:*

*Sun – grain – chicken – human*

*Toast:*

*Sun – grain – human*

*Cereal:*

*Sun – grain – human*

*Milk:*

*Sun – grass – cow – human*

*All animals and plants need energy to live. Where does this energy come from?*

*- Animals get their energy by eating either plants or other animals.*

*- Plants get their energy from the sun.*

*Energy from the sun is passed to plants; plants pass that energy to plant-eaters; and plant-eaters pass that energy to meat-eaters.*

*For example, energy from the sun is passed to the grass; that energy is then passed to the rabbit who eats the grass; and it is then passed to the fox, who eats the rabbit.*

*Or, let's look at it the other way around, from top to bottom:*

*The fox eats the rabbit, who eats the grass, which grows because of the sun.*

Write two examples of food chains on the board—one for a land animal, the other for a sea animal. For instance:

Sun – Grass – Rabbit – Fox

Sun – Phytoplankton – Zooplankton – Fish – Penguin – Seal – Orca

### **Vocabulary**

Phytoplankton: tiny plants that float in the ocean

Zooplankton: tiny animals that drift in the ocean

### **Did you know?**

Students who eat breakfast each day perform better in school.

The brain uses more energy than any other part of the human body.

### **Procedure**

1. Have students make a medium-sized paper chain (6—8 ft.) to hang in the classroom after each *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* episode.

-- To make a chain, curl a strip of paper into a circle and staple; loop a second strip through that circle and staple; and so on.

-- Based on time and classroom space, you may use the same chain for each exercise, or make six chains and leave them up on display.

-- If you make six chains, use colors like brown, gold and green for land animals and blue, green and grey for water dwellers.

2. Using index cards, students make cards with pictures and labels of the following: sun, grass, fruit tree, plankton, krill, fish, bird, seal, squid, antelope.

-- Each week, visit [discoveryschool.com/wildkingdom](http://discoveryschool.com/wildkingdom) for lists of cards to make for each episode.

-- Make multiple copies of cards if using more than one paper food chain in the classroom.

-- Pictures should be hand-drawn, but labels should be typed in large print to make them easy to read from a distance.

3. Punch a hole in the top of your *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* card of the week, and do the same for all the hand-made cards.

4. Using a pipe cleaner, attach the *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* card to the chain. Ask individual students to select and attach handmade cards in proper order.

Example:

ORCA: orca – seal – penguin – fish – zooplankton -- phytoplankton

LEOPARD: leopard – antelope – grass

POLAR BEAR: polar bear – seal – penguin -- fish – zooplankton – phytoplankton

### **Extension: Food Chain Challenge**

#### **Grades**

4—6

#### **Materials**

Butcher paper, pens, animal encyclopedias

Work your animal's food chain into an elaborate food web. Using a large piece of butcher paper spread out on the floor, see how many lines and links you can make. Optional: create a competition by dividing the class into two groups. Each team leader must draw a food web, based on suggestions by the team mates. Team mates may use animal encyclopedias for reference.

