

Lesson Plan

Food Webs

Book: *Saving American Crocodiles*

Series: Saving Animals

Level: Navigator

Objective

To help students use charts to understand the relationships of facts in a text about American crocodiles.

Supplies

- *Saving American Crocodiles* book
- Access to the National Geographic “Food Web” web page:
<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/food-web/4th-grade/>
- Computer paper and pencils
- Whiteboard

Before the Activity

Read through the *Saving American Crocodiles* book, or assign it to students to read on their own. Pass out computer paper and pencils to students. Draw a simple food chain on the whiteboard by doing the following:

- Write the words *lions*, *zebras*, and *plants* on the whiteboard, with *lions* at the top, *zebras* in the middle, and *plants* at the bottom.
- Draw an arrow pointing up from *plants* to *zebras*.
- Draw an arrow pointing up from *zebras* to *lions*.

Activity

On the “Food Web” web page, scroll down to the text that begins with “Every living being is part of a food chain.” Read the first two paragraphs out loud, pointing out the parts of the food chain on the whiteboard as you go. Explain that the arrows on the whiteboard show the direction of nutrients and energy. By eating plants, zebras gain nutrients and energy from them. By eating zebras, lions gain nutrients and energy.

Next, read aloud the paragraphs about the different trophic levels: producers, consumers, and detritivores and decomposers. Explain that students will draw food webs for the adult American crocodile, showing the different food chains that the adult American crocodile is a part of. Open *Saving American Crocodiles* to Chapter 2 (“Food Webs”). This chapter describes some of the relationships the American crocodile has to other animals in its ecosystem.

Students should use this chapter to draw their food webs. They should be on the lookout for animals that the American crocodile eats, and for animals or plants that *those* animals eat. There should be eight total animals or plants in the food web.

Evaluation

Collect the food webs at the end of the class period. Evaluate students' diagrams by giving them 1 point for every correct placement of an animal, and 1 point for every correctly oriented arrow, for a total of 17 points.

American crocodiles should be at the very top of the page, since they are apex predators (p. 14).

Raccoons, *opossums*, and *fish* should be on the next level underneath, with arrows pointing from them to *American crocodiles*. This is because the American crocodile eats those animals (p. 14).

Insects, *eggs*, *plants*, and *small animals/frogs* should be on the third and bottom level of the food web.

- *Insects*, *eggs*, and *plants* should have arrows pointing from them to *opossums*, since opossums eat those things (p. 14).
- *Plants* should have an arrow pointing from it to *fish*, since fish eat plants (p. 14).
- *Eggs* and *small animals/frogs* should have arrows pointing from them to *raccoons*, since raccoons eat those things (p. 14).

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 4 (RI 4.1, 4.5), and the National Science Education Standards' Content Standard C, grades K–4.