

Web of Life

Overview: Uses string to connect various mudflat/ocean animals to show the interconnectedness of all life and the importance of each species.

Objectives:

1. Review mudflat plants and animals
2. Illustrate the food web
3. Show interdependence of species on each other
4. Show importance of keeping habitats clean

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials:

Ball of string
Web of Life mudflat cards

Procedure:

1. Have the students form a circle and give each student a card. Be strategic because you will be creating a web and you will want to have certain animals and plants across from one another for the web to look like a web.
2. Ask the students to take a minute or so to look at his or her card and get to know themselves a bit. What do they eat? Where do they live? What might eat them?
3. Take the ball of string and begin with the bottom of the food chain (Plankton) — you could start with the sun or ocean if you wanted also. The easiest and fastest thing to do is start with Plankton and move up the food chain.
4. Ask the students who might eat plankton. Direct them a bit that you are looking for a filter feeder (worm or clam). Have the Plankton hold the end of the string and pass the ball to the Worm or Clam.
5. Work your way up the food chain asking the students questions like: “Who here would you eat?” “Who here would eat you?” “Who do you need to survive?” “Who here needs you to survive?”
6. Fill in some gaps with sun, water, moon, mud, etc. Use this as an opportunity to review concepts like photosynthesis (connect Sun to Plant), tidal activity (Moon to Water)
7. Game continues until all students are connected at least once and a Web of Life has been created.
8. Ask “What would happen if there was a toxic chemical spill in the ocean and all the plankton dies out?” Plankton drops the string, and work your way back up the food chain with students dropping their strings as they die out. Continue asking students to drop their strings until the Web of Life is not visible and you are left with just the Sun, Water, Mud and Moon.
9. Review what happened — did you know Plankton was so important to you?