

Activity 5

Predator-Prey Interactions Definitions

The vocabulary from Activity 1 on the scientific method is important for all your science lessons. Review the Activity 1 vocabulary, with emphasis on the words *analyze*, *control*, *data*, *dependent variable*, *experiment*, *experimental error*, *hypothesis*, *inference*, *observation*, *prediction*, and *repeated trials*.

Camouflage – Blending in with the surroundings in order to hide from predators or prey.

Carnivore – An animal that eats other animals.

Consumers – Animals, and in rare cases plants, that eat other animals and/or plants to fulfill their own nutritional energy requirements.

Decomposer – A living organism at the base of the food web that breaks down dead animal and plant litter into mineral rich humus (also called reducers).

Detritivore – Animals that feed on detritus.

Detritus – Non-living organic matter such as decaying leaf litter.

Ecosystem – A specific geographic region characterized by the local landforms, the various plants and animals that live there, and the prevailing climatic conditions such as temperature and rainfall.

Food chain – The pathway by which organisms obtain, use, and transfer energy (Example—plants are eaten by a grazing animal, and a larger predator eats the grazer; grass→rabbit→bobcat).

Food web – Multiple interwoven food chains (many different species of animals eat plants and many different species of predators eat grazing animals).

Herbivore – An animal that eats only plants.

Insectivore – Animals and plants that eat insects.

Larva – An infant stage of some species of animals that looks much different from the adult form.

Mimicry – When one species looks like another species, resulting in increased survival.

Niche – The “occupation” or role that an organism plays in its environment; what an organism does, such as wolf spiders occupy the *niche* of preying on insects that live on the forest floor.

Omnivore – An animal that eats plants and animals.

Predators – Organisms that obtain their nutritional energy by killing and eating other organisms.

Prey – Any creature that is hunted and caught to be eaten for food.

Producer – Plants at the base of the food web that provide nutritional energy to herbivores and omnivores.

Refuge – A place that provides protection from danger or gives shelter.