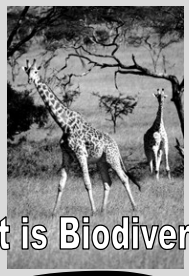
The Web of Life



What is Biodiversity?

"Tuning in & Finding out"

Learners create word webs to illustrate inter-connections amongst living things and non-living things

Grading:

Time:

Place: Inside/Outside

Group size: 4 - 6 / Individual

Activity Outcomes:

Learners are able to:

- identify Biodiversity components
- consider the complex connections that characterise life on Earth

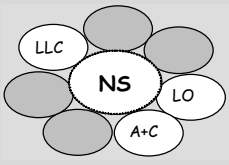
Assessment:

- Educator assessment of group presentations - use a rubric
- Peer assessment to record different learners' understanding of the concept Biodiversity

Skills:

- Communicating prior knowledge
- Decision-making and creative thinking
- Respect for opinions of others

Learning Area links



Background

Have you ever looked closely at a spider's web? It is made of many tiny threads or strands, and each strand is connected to many other strands. The living environment can be compared to the spider's delicate web. People, plants and animals are like the strands of the web. Sometimes a strand of the spider's web is broken. This may change the way the other strands are attached to it. Damage to one part of the web may change all the other parts. The life of every living thing is connected to and affected by the lives of many others. The lives of many can be affected if one living thing dies. Think about a spiderweb again. The web is always attached at its edges to something else. The Web of Life must also be supported. It is supported by the non-living environment. Each plant and animal in the web must have water and air, shelter and space and, minerals from the soil. Air, water, food, space, shelter and soil support the web of life. Anything that changes these supports will affect the living web. Too great a change may destroy the web.

Biodiversity is the variety of life around us - and MUCH MORE. It is also everything that living things do - the grand total of interactions of living things among themselves and with their environment.

This introductory activity focuses on connections that form the heart of BIODIVERSITY. These connections are human-centred. Later, in the section on Interdependence, learners will apply the same principles to the natural world. By making their own word webs using the words provided, learners can begin to consider the complex connections that characterise life on Earth. The activity can also give an idea of how your learners are thinking about BIODIVERSITY.

Activity 5.5 can be used as an extension of this activity.

Activity Guidelines:

Needed: *Overhead projector, transparencies, poster, paper, pens, keywords and webwords.*

- Write the key words on separate pieces of paper and put them into a container.
- Write web words on chalkboard or overhead projector.
- Review vocabulary and divide class into groups.

- A learner from each group picks a key word and writes it in the centre of a piece of paper.
- Learners form a web using as many of the web words as possible. (See example, p. A19)
- They decide if the connection is a beneficial one. If so, draw the line in **blue**. If the connection causes problems, draw the line in **red**.
- Encourage them to describe in words the connection they are creating i.e. **can cause, benefit, endanger, sustain, create**.
- Each group should now be able to explain their web. Ask learners if they notice any similarities or differences in their group's web. Discuss them.

Variations:

Biodiversity

Now encourage the groups to create new webs, using **Biodiversity** as a key word. Explain that biodiversity is the ultimate web because it includes all life on earth. Discuss how biodiversity affects people's lives.

Create a schoolweb

To emphasise how individual species fit together in a complex and interacting web of life, ask learners to look at the biodiversity in their school or even their own home. Each group must come up with a list of web words using "school" or "home" as the key word. What are the different components needed to make everything work? Think of the different people (from the principal to the janitor), the shelter and other materials (paper, pencils, desks), as well as the energy (electricity, gas, wood) needed to make the whole system work. Make a web or poster illustrating these connections. Discuss what happens when some part of the system is removed.

Protect

Protect natural links in your environment by reporting all illegal dumping to local authorities.

Key words

Earth

Animals

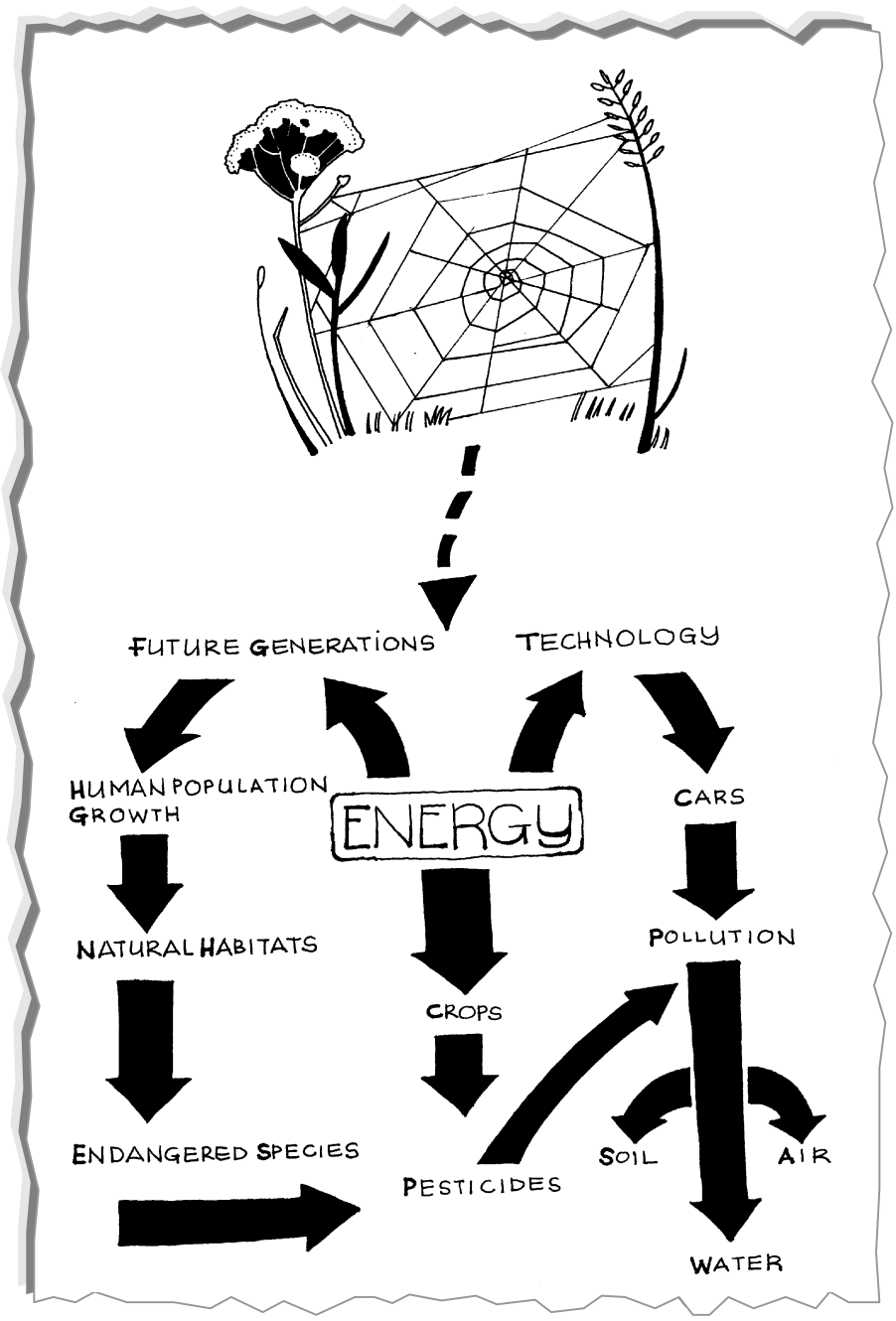
Plants

Energy

People

Web words

Technology	Twenty-first century	Cars
Natural habitat	Pesticides	Endangered
Crops	Food	Organic farming
Litter	Oceans	Atmosphere
Shopping	Money	Future generation
Soil	Water	Air
Solutions	Human population growth	Medicine
Pollution	School	Stress



ENERGY WORD WEB