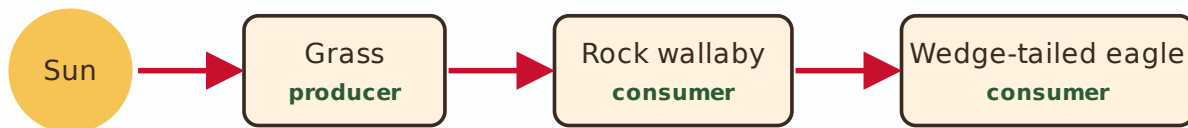


Building Food Chains

What is a food chain?

All the energy in an ecosystem starts with the Sun. A food chain is a way of showing how energy passes from one living thing to the next as they eat and are eaten.

A food chain always begins with a producer — usually a plant, which makes its own food using energy from the Sun. Next come the consumers — animals that cannot make their own food, so they eat other living things to get energy.



The arrow points to the living thing doing the eating.

You can read each arrow as "gives energy to".

A simple Australian food chain: grass → rock wallaby → wedge-tailed eagle. Energy from the Sun passes along the chain in the direction of the arrows.

Watch out! A food chain is **not** about "what can beat what" in a fight. It only shows what a living thing *eats* to get energy. The arrow always points **towards the eater** — the direction the energy travels.

Your turn: build a food chain

Q1. Fill in the blanks using the words in the box.

producer • consumer • Sun • energy

The _____ gives light to plants. A plant is a _____ because it makes its own food. An animal that eats other living things is a _____. Food chains show how _____ passes from one living thing to the next.

Q2. Look at this food chain. Draw an arrow between each living thing so the arrows point the correct way. Then write **producer** or **consumer** under each one.

gum leaves koala wedge-tailed eagle

Q3. Are humans producers or consumers? Circle your answer and explain how you know.

producer / consumer

Q4. Make your own food chain using living things that live together in one Australian habitat. Draw at least **three** living things and join them with arrows that point the right way. Label the producer and the consumers.

Q5. Explain what your arrows show. Use the words energy and Sun in your answer.

Choosing living things from the **same habitat** makes your food chain make sense. A tiger and a kangaroo would not be in the same chain, because they do not live in the same place!