



Important Insects

explore the importance of insects in a food web

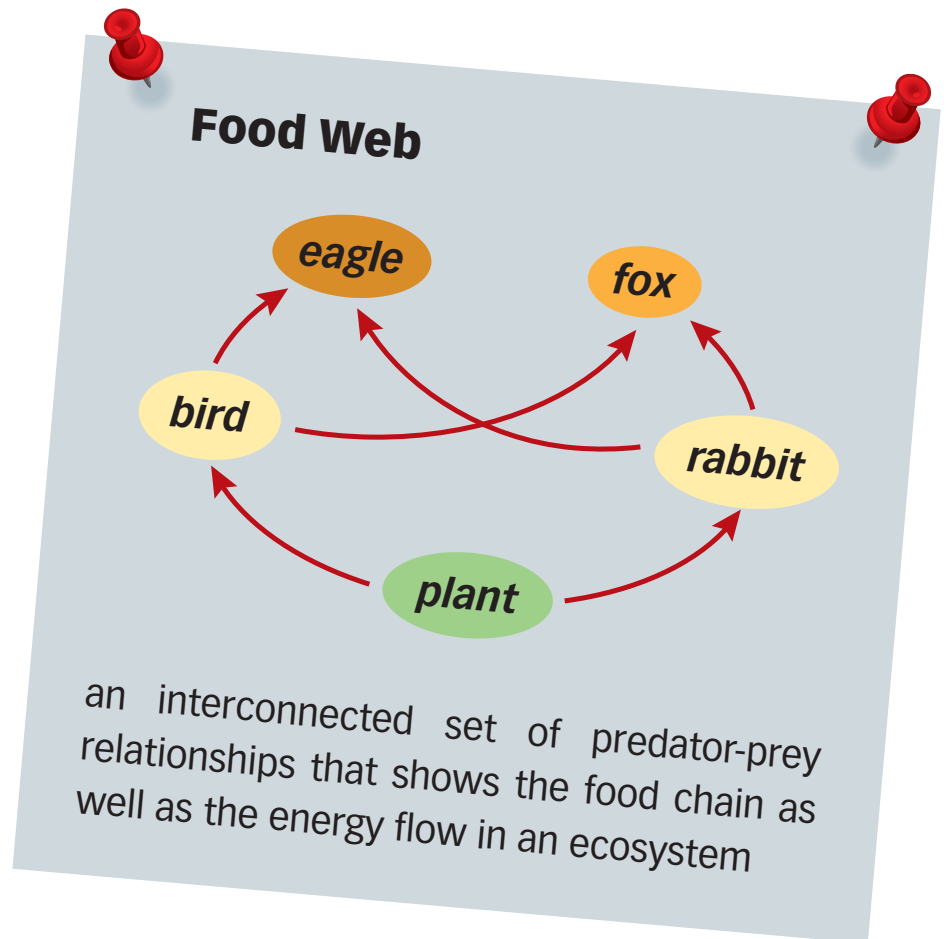
There are many different types of insects, such as ants, ladybugs, and bees. Many of us consider insects as pests because some bite us and some sting us. But did you know that insects play a vital role in supporting ecosystems? Insects are key to aerating soil, pollinating plants, and decomposing organic matter. They are also an important source of food for other animals in many ecosystems. Without insects, what would happen to other life forms?





What you need:

- paper
- a stapler
- thin straws
- scissors
- modelling clay

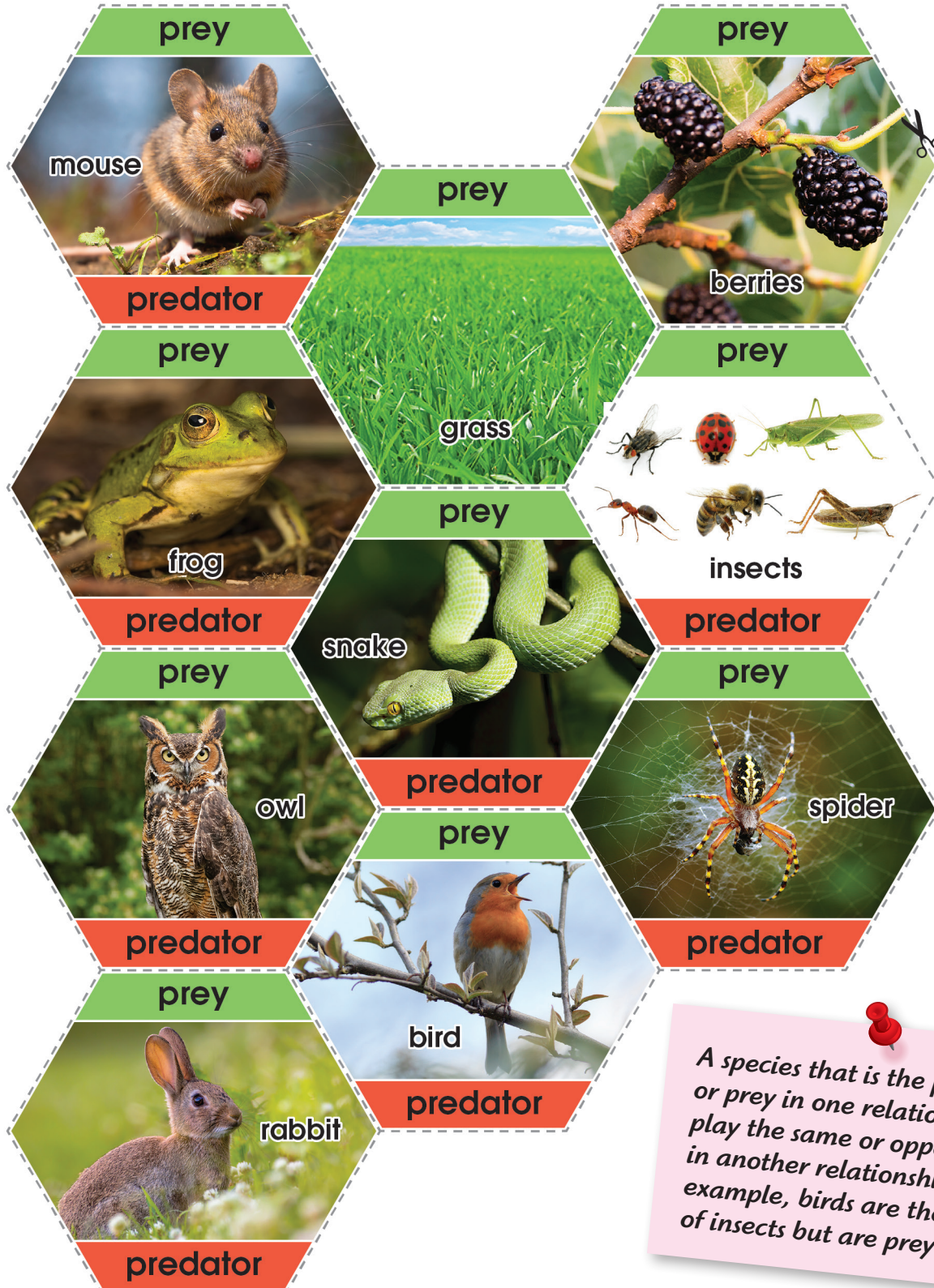


What to do:

- 1 Cut out the building units on the next page to build a food web.
- 2 Attach the “grass” unit and the “berries” unit to two pieces of modelling clay.
- 3 Connect the building units using straws and staples according to the predator-prey relationship to create the food web. You may connect two straws to extend the length if needed.
- 4 Cut the “insect” unit in half. Observe how it affects the food web.



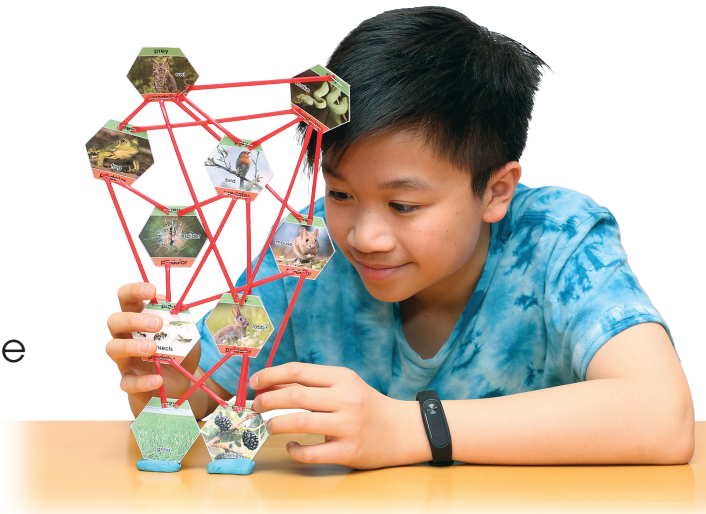
Building Units:



A species that is the predator or prey in one relationship can play the same or opposite role in another relationship. For example, birds are the predators of insects but are prey to snakes.



The food web collapsed once the “insect” unit was cut. In a food web, species depend on one another to survive. Insects are primary consumers that get energy from the producers, such as grass and berries. Once insects are eliminated, the species that prey on insects, such as birds, frogs, and spiders, need to look for other food sources; otherwise, they will die from a lack of food. Eventually, animals at the top of the food chain, such as snakes and owls, will also die of hunger.



If insects went extinct, the world would be in a lot of trouble. All life on Earth would eventually become extinct within a short period of time. The next time you see a beneficial insect in your backyard, will you swat it or say “thank you” to it?



Helping Insects in Canada

You can help insects survive in Canada! Try planting native flowers and shrubs around your home. These plants provide insects with food and shelter. Consider planting a variety of plants and remember not to use pesticides, which can harm insect populations.

