



## NATURE WEB INVESTIGATORS 2021

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Setting:** Any Natural Area

**Theme:** The nature web connects the sun to all the plants and animals and is broken by the absence of any one component.

**Description:** Students learn about a nature web by participating in creating a web model and looking for evidence of this web in various habitats.

**Recommended Time:** 30 minutes

**Recommended Group Size:** 15

**BIAS:** [Interconnections](#)

**FOSS Kit:** Trees

**State Standards:**

- The sun provides heat and light to the Earth.

**Materials List:**

- 1 sun photo or costume mask on a string to hang around a student's neck
- 1 set of pictures that creates a complete nature web (these will include plants and animals and may be held by student or strung as a chain around their neck).
- 1 ball of string

**Getting Ready:**

- Organize nature webs (make sure there are items to make a complete web).
- Scout out the location for a good place to do the nature web activity.
- Establish 3-5 stops along the trail that showcase the various habitats if you can (field, pond, small river, woods).

**Introduction:** Introduce yourself and other volunteers. Encourage adults to participate. Review the difference between a Natural Area and a Park. Explain the theme of the lesson.

**ENGAGE:**

- Ask Students if they know what a nature web is. Show an example of the web and what happens if a piece of the web is broken or missing. After listening to the responses, explain that today they are going to be investigators, and today they will learn:
  - What a nature web is
  - How to find and follow the nature web
- **Note:** Explain this used to be called a food chain, but a web more accurately describes how things are linked. It is more about how habitat parts interact or depend on each other and less about food source. That is why it is now a nature web and not a food chain.

**EXPLORE:**

- To begin, students form a circle, holding hands. Ask the students what shape a circle is (round) and what else in nature is big and round (the sun!) Ask why the sun is so important

to nature. Ask, "What would happen if the sun stayed asleep and didn't come out one day?". Ask if they think the sun's energy helps plants, trees, grasses, insects, birds, mammals, us? Make the point that the sun is the beginning of every nature web.

- Ask a student if they would like to be the sun. Give them the sun costume or picture and have them stand in the middle of the circle and hold the ball of string. The rest of the group will be assigned a random plant or animal picture (make sure to tell the students that ALL the items are important to our web, so it doesn't matter if someone else gets a photo that you like better). Ask the group what needs the sun to grow (grasses, trees, plants, flowers). The sun will then hold the end of the ball of string and pass the ball to one of these items in the circle. Whomever gets the ball passed to them can then locate another plant or animal around the circle to toss the ball of string to while holding on to a piece for themselves. Ask that student to verbalize how they are connected to the other picture (the group can help them if they are not sure). This will continue till all pictures have been connected by the string and a web has been made.

**EXPLAIN:**

- Review how all the students are linked to the sun.
- Ask if students can see other connections in the web where the string has not come directly to them, but their picture might rely on another picture in the circle.

**EXPLORE (Again):**

- Tell students that they will be going on a short walk and will be looking for their part of the nature web along the way. They need to count how many times they find their example (generally speaking- plant or animal life). K students who are plants may need an adult helper to help them count all the plants.
- Give each group suggestions about what they should look for. "Insects" might spot chewed leaves, or some holes in the bark or they might see some insects. "Plants" might find signs of chewing or areas that are matted down for a bed. "Birds" look for feathers and nests, or limbs that would be good for birds to perch on and look for food, or actual birds. "Mammals" look for hair, tracks, bones, or holes in trees where animals might live, scat or other actual animals.

**Nat Note:** Some VN's do this portion of the activity by having the parents or chaperones be the plants. This helps avoid the issue with young students trying to count numerous plants and helps minimize students arguing over who gets to be an animal. It also helps to set expectations that some animals in the nature web might have more signs or be more visible than others, but that they are all equally important to the nature web.

**REMINDE THE STUDENTS NOT TO COLLECT ANYTHING!**

**CONCLUDE:**

- Ask if anyone can tell you what a nature web is.
- Ask each group how many signs they found.
- Ask if you can think of a nature web that you are a part of.