

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child is now beginning TEKS 4.12, “Organisms and Environments.” Read more to find out what your child is exploring!



What We’re Doing

What do these plants and animals need from their environment? How might they rely on each other?

By the end, your child will be able to

- explain how producers can make their own food from sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide
- describe the cycling of matter and flow of energy through a food web
- describe the environments of living things from the past based on fossil evidence

At-Home Activity

To prepare your child for TEKS 4.12, try this short activity:

- Show your child images of seven different types of animals.
- Have your child observe the images and identify the animal. Ask your child to tell whether the animal lives on land or in water.

Engage your child by asking these questions:

- In which type of environment did most of the animals live?
- Did the animals from the same environment have anything in common?
- What were the common features for each type of environment?

Helpful Resources



Log on to *Ed* to

- download lesson PDFs
- interact with the digital lesson

- explore the FUNomenal Reader
Uncovering a Story

- examine the simulation *Layers of Change*



Science Summary

Vocabulary for this topic includes *consumer, environment, photosynthesis, producer, decomposer, food web, aquatic, and terrestrial*.

- Producers can make their own food for energy. Consumers must eat other living things to get the energy they need. Both producers and consumers rely on their environment for sunlight, water, and living space.
- Food chains represent the flow of energy from the sun to producers and then to consumers. Food chains are linear. Consumers said to be “higher” on the food chain eat living things said to be “lower” on the food chain. Food webs represent how different food chains depend on one another.
- Fossils are the remains or traces of past living things. Studying fossils, we can determine if a living thing of the past lived on land (terrestrial) or in the water (aquatic).

Misconception Alert!

If your child has one of these misconceptions, here’s how you can help.

- **Misconception 1: Trees are not plants.**

To address this, explain that structures such as stems, leaves, and flowers are not what determines if something is a plant. Show a picture of a mushroom and explain that, although it may have a stem, it is not a plant. It cannot make its own food.

- **Misconception 2: Fossils are pieces of dead animals and plants.**

To address this, hold up a piece of paper and ask your child to identify what is in your hand. They will most likely say “a piece of paper.” Explain that even though paper is derived

from a tree, it is not a tree. Fossils are rocks that replaced or formed around animal or plant remains, not the actual remains of the organisms.

Teacher Comments

[Teacher insert text here for Parents and Guardians]

Thank you for supporting your child's education.

Sincerely,

[Teacher]